



HISTORY OF THE  
DECCAN

VOLUME I

*Part VIII: Fine Arts*



# HISTORY OF THE DECCAN

IN THREE VOLUMES

*Volume I: Early Period*

---

## *Board of Editors*

Dr. G. Yazdani, O.B.E. (*Chairman*)

Professor K. A. Nilakanta Sastri

Professor Haroon Khan Sherwani, M.A. (Oxon.)

Dr. P. M. Joshi

Dr. Yusuf Husain Khan

Dr. P. Sreenivasachar



# HISTORY OF THE DECCAN

---

VOLUME I  
*Part VIII: Fine Arts*

*Published under the authority of  
the Government of Hyderabad by*  
GEOFFREY CUMBERLEGE  
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
LONDON AND BOMBAY



PART VIII  
FINE ARTS



Royal Chamber, a lady dressing the hair of another  
lady in the group, Cave XVII, Ajanta





## PART VIII

# FINE ARTS

## ARCHITECTURE, SCULPTURE, AND PAINTING

*By* G. YAZDANI, M.A., LITT.D., O.B.E.

- I. Preliminary Remarks, General Survey.
- II. Architecture; origin and development, significance of religion in the evolution of the art.
- III. Sculpture; Buddhist, Jaina, and Brāhmanic: spiritual and artistic import of these.
- IV. Painting; its rise, development, and decline.

### APPENDIXES:

Terracottas, discovered during excavations.

Art of Dancing, as represented in the Sculpture and Painting of the Deccan.



## PRELIMINARY REMARKS

EARLY man of the Deccan has left some engravings on rocks which show his sense of the pictorial art in the drawing of both human and animal figures, however crude they may be. Some notable examples of these drawings are on a hill near Benkal (Plate I *a*), a village in the Gangāvatī *tālūk* of the Raichur District.<sup>1</sup> One of them represents a hunting scene, the figures of horses with riders being prominent in it. One hunter is armed with an axe which closely resembles a metal weapon, and on this assumption the drawing may not be considered to date back earlier than the Iron age, and may even be much later. Another class of ancient monuments which bear some relation to Buddhist architectural forms in regard to their origin is represented by the megalithic tombs of the Deccan. They exist in great abundance, and among them 'cairns', or tumuli with stone circles, show a striking resemblance to the Buddhist *stūpas*, and may be their earlier prototypes (Plate I *b*). But architecture as a fine art must possess certain æsthetic features and must also indicate a creative effort in the shaping of human actions towards the attainment of intellectual progress and elevation of life in its various aspects. The prehistoric monuments of the Deccan fall far below such a standard and therefore they cannot be studied in this chapter.

The earliest specimens of fine art of which the dates can be fixed on palaeographical grounds are Buddhist antiquities, representing painting, sculpture, and architectural themes. But these do not date back earlier than the second century B.C., although the art which they exhibit is of a well-developed type and must have taken one or two or more millenniums to reach that stage. To expand and justify this view it may be observed that the representations of four-storied buildings in the façades of the caves at Kondāṇe and Beḍṣā, with projecting balconies supported by curved brackets and deeply recessed windows fitted with latticed screens of elegant design, show a long tradition and continuous progress in the art of architecture, and could not have sprung up all of a sudden in the second century B.C., to which date the monuments have been assigned on the basis of the inscriptions carved on them (Plate II *a*).<sup>2</sup> This opinion is further confirmed by the arrangement of the small and large rafters and cross-beams carved in the rock-ceiling of the *vihāra* at Kondāṇe. The arrangement suggests engineering

<sup>1</sup> The best route by which to approach Benkal is from the Gangāvatī-Ginigera road; a *kachcha* path branches off near the sixth milestone when coming from Gangāvatī.

<sup>2</sup> Kondāṇe and Beḍṣā are both in the Bombay State now, but in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era they would have belonged to the Andhra kingdom of the Deccan.



valley culture, the date of which has been tentatively fixed in the middle of the third millennium B.C.; and secondly, whether the arts in their origin and essential features are indigenous or are based on those of the western Asiatic countries. The answer to the first question is not difficult to give, for there is apparently nothing in common between the styles or technique of the sculpture and architecture of the Deccan and those of the Indus valley. Unless the writings on the seals should, if ever deciphered, prove the contrary, it will be safe to assume that the Indus valley antiquities are more intimately connected with their prototypes in Babylonia and other ancient countries of Western Asia than with the specimens of art produced in the Deccan during the first millennium B.C.

As regards the second question, it may be observed that in the latter part of the first millennium B.C., or even earlier, foreigners who are known in history and contemporary records under the names of *Sakas* (Scythians), *Pahlavas* (Parthians), and *Yavanas* (Greeks) entered the Deccan in considerable numbers and became merged in the general population of the country. The earliest of these were probably *Sakas* or Scythians, who, after leaving their original home on the shores of the Caspian Sea, had settled down in the country to the east of Fārsistān, which was subsequently named after them Sīstān (Sakistān, Arabicized form Sajistān). They entered India probably both through Afghānistān and through Sindh, and the emigrants proceeding through the latter province spread towards the Deccan. The megalithic tombs of the Deccan have been attributed by some eminent archaeologists to such Scythian immigrants, because these tombs bear a close resemblance to their prototypes in other countries of the world wherever the Scythians went. If this view be accepted, the entry of the Scythians into the Deccan must be placed at several millenniums B.C., for the pottery and the iron and bronze implements which have been found in the majority of the megalithic tombs show a primitive culture.

As regards the *Pahlavas*, they would have come in the wake of the *Sakas*, and, as in North-west India, there may have been settlements of the *Pahlavas* in the Deccan and the provinces bordering on the north and north-west of it even before the Buddha preached his doctrine in the fifth century B.C. The *Yavanas* (Greeks) came to India first with Alexander and their migration to the southern provinces was probably connected with motives to extend their political power, as well as to propagate the Buddhist religion, for the names of many *Yavanas* are associated with the monuments of that faith.

Now studying the monuments themselves, we may note that although some archaeologists have connected the style of the rock-hewn shrines of the Deccan with the architecture of the rock-hewn tombs of Egypt and Persia, yet the idea of dwelling in caves, in the primitive period for personal safety and later, in a stage of intellectual and spiritual advancement, for contemplation and enlightenment, has been inherent in man in the East as well as in

the West. The natural caverns may have acquired sanctity as the abode of *rishis*, for whose comfort their devoted disciples may have removed the irregular features of the habitats of such pious *gurus* by dressing the walls and ceilings and levelling the floors. This process would have developed in course of time and a conventional style arisen of building shrines and replicas of tombs (*stūpas*) by cutting the rock. The cave temples of the Deccan are therefore indigenous in regard both to their origin and to their development and their architecture seems to have been copied from earlier, or contemporary, wooden or brick and stone structures. The influence of wood architecture is apparent not only in the shape of the pillars and their inward inclination,<sup>1</sup> but also in the presence of semi-circular rafters of wood in the ceilings of the early *chaitya*-caves at Kārle, Kondāṇe, and Ajanta, which are actually redundant in rock-hewn shrines but would have been an essential feature of the ceiling of a wooden building. Similarly, the beams and rafters of the *vihāra*-cave at Kondāṇe clearly show that they have been copied from the flat ceilings of structures built of bricks or of stone. Bricks of large size and of strong texture were made in the Deccan from quite early times, and in the excavations at Ajanta the bricks found at the base of the façade of cave X probably date from the second century B.C., for the inscription referring to the construction of the façade is in second century B.C. characters.<sup>2</sup> During the period extending from the first to the third centuries B.C., or going still farther back, the use of bricks for walls seems to have been quite common in the Deccan for both religious and secular buildings. Similarly, flat ceilings resting on wooden beams also came into vogue, although the majority of the dwellings were wooden structures with barrel-shaped or circular roofs. Some of these houses were of more than one story, and had, as we have noticed above, balconies and latticed windows opening on the front of the building. The bulk of the population lived in huts built of mud walls and straw roofs such as are seen in the villages today. The style of architecture, as shown by the archaeological monuments, or as represented in the early paintings of Ajanta, or the sculpture of the Buddhist caves, indicates no foreign influence as far as can be seen, except for the apsidal form of the *chaityas*, which bears a striking resemblance to the plans of the Roman basilicas, or to the still earlier Phœnician temples of Malta, although the latter have a semi-circular projection at both ends in the length of the structure. The Ka'ba, which according to the Muslim tradition was built by Abraham, has an apsidal extension at one end, called at the present

time the *Haṭīm*. In studying the old Phoenician temples one notices that the square or rectangular part of the building was meant for housing the images of gods, and the semi-circular or circular projections were sacrificial pits for holding offerings to deities. Phoenicians were expert builders and wood-carvers in King David's time, and he invited a party of Phoenician artisans to assist him in building the temple at Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Phoenicians were also great sea-traders, and references in the Old Testament to gold, spices, and peacocks, which are specially associated with the western coast of India, indicate that there was some sea-borne trade between the western part of the Deccan and the western Asiatic countries. There is thus some possibility that the apsidal plan of the house of God of the Phoenicians was copied in India as it was at Mecca, which was situated in the middle of the caravan route from Palestine to the Yemen. The form may indeed have sprung up independently here, for the offering of sacrifices would have required at the beginning a circular pit, which at a later period might have become a conventional form for the altar. But against the latter view are the facts that the apsidal form of the temples disappeared from India with the waning of the Buddhist religion, and that except in the case of one or two temples in South India this plan is not to be noticed among Brāhmanic temples elsewhere. The offering of sacrifices to gods was an essential feature of the Brāhmanic faith from the beginning, and if the apsidal form of temples had originated and developed in the Deccan or in India, it would not have been given up on the extinction of the Buddhist religion.

Minor traces of western Asiatic influence may also be seen in the early sculpture of the Deccan, for instance in the winged animals at Pitalkhorā, Aurangābād District, the crenellated or stepped parapet carved at Koṇḍāṇe, Kārlē, Ajanta, and other early Buddhist sites, and the bell-shaped capitals of the pillars of many ancient monuments in the Deccan. Among these, the winged animals have a close resemblance to their prototypes in Assyria; the stepped parapet which is so common in North African Islamic monuments has recently been discovered on the monuments of Ur (Chaldaeā) and must have come to India from the latter place. The bell-shaped capitals have a striking affinity to their prototypes at Persepolis, and this form may have been introduced into India by the early Parthian (*Pahlava*) converts to Buddhism. Such similarities are, however, few, and it would be a sad mistake to conclude from them that the architecture or sculpture or other arts of the Deccan are wholly or even largely of foreign origin.

As the specimens of art belonging to the early period are of a more developed character in the Deccan than are those to be found north of the Narmadā, and the Godāvarī, it appears that the fine arts had not only an independent but a much earlier beginning in the Deccan than they had in Northern India. For example, the architecture and sculpture of the rock-

<sup>1</sup> 1 *Chronicles*, xxii, 2-4, 15.



hewn shrines of the Deccan are of a much higher quality than those of the rock-temples of Bihar and Orissa. As regards the superior workmanship to be noticed in the lion-capital of Sārnāth, or the carving at Sāñchī, it may be observed that it is doubtful whether the former represents Indian craftsmanship, while at the latter place there are inscriptions to show that artisans of the Deccan were employed to build and embellish the Great Stūpa. Andhras were politically strong enough to resist the encroachments of the Mauryas, and after the fall of the latter dynasty they actually defeated their successors, the Śuṅgas, and took possession of a large part of their empire, almost up to the borders of Magadha. The gold industry of the Deccan was in a flourishing condition in the time of Aśoka, and the references to the export of jewels and fabrics by Kauṭilya and early foreign writers confirm the impression that during the centuries preceding the Christian era the Deccan was not only an emporium of trade but a great centre of culture and civilization.

It may further be observed that the human figures represented in the sculpture or painting of the Deccan are mainly aboriginal,<sup>1</sup> showing that the sculptor or painter had before his mind the people of his own stock even when carving or portraying the figures of gods and goddesses. But this feature of the art of the Deccan is lost in the third century A.D., when the Andhras were succeeded by the Vākātakas who had matrimonial relations with the Guptas. In the later sculpture and painting of the Deccan the principal figures have Āryan features, while the aborigines appear only as servants or play a similar role.

The potter's craft was also fairly well developed in the centuries immediately preceding or following the Christian era, and the terra-cotta figurines discovered in the excavations at Kondāpur exhibit not only the skill of the craftsman in faithfully representing the facial features, but also a superior art in giving expression to the character and feeling of the semi-religious personages represented. The jeweller's art had also reached a high stage of elegance and many a decorative motif to be noticed in the early architecture and sculpture of the Deccan is borrowed from jewellery patterns and designs. All these crafts seem to have been closely correlated, and as a master-sculptor may have played the role of an expert architect in the designing of rock-hewn shrines, similarly a goldsmith would have acted in the same capacity for the decorative schemes which form such an important feature of these monuments. These questions will be discussed further when the architecture, sculpture, and painting of the Deccan are described separately in chronological order.

<sup>1</sup> Figures of foreigners, *Sakas* or *Pahlavas*, are carved as donors of caves in some places, and they can be easily identified by their head-gear, dress, and foot-wear (Plate XXIII a).

## II

### ARCHITECTURE

IN the preliminary remarks made above it has been shown that the earliest specimens of architecture to be found in the Deccan belong to the Buddhist faith, which flourished there from about the third century B.C. to the seventh century A.D., when it became practically extinct. The Brāhmanic faith was patronized during this period by many of the rulers, but for the history of the architecture of the Deccan the revival of this latter system of belief begins in the sixth century A.D., under the Chālukyas, who were enthusiastic patrons of architecture. They adorned their capital, Bādāmi, with rock-hewn shrines, some of which still exist and represent the earliest Brahmanic monuments of this style in the Deccan. The Chālukyas in the northern part of the Deccan were ousted by the Rāshtrakūṭas, who built some temples of outstanding merit at Ellora during the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. These shrines are hewn out of the living rock although their plans, comprising a fore-court, a room for the sacred bull, *Nandi*, a hall with a portico in front and the cella or shrine at the back, are copied from temples built of brick and stone which were being constructed on the same model about that time. At Ellora there are also rock-hewn shrines belonging to the Jaina faith, and these were probably carved in the eighth and ninth centuries A.D. Among them the Indra Sabhā group is the most important, and indeed, both in ornamental detail and in workmanship, it is in no way inferior to the Brahmanic caves.

Among the oldest structural shrines which still exist, the temple at Aihole<sup>1</sup> is especially interesting, because, like the Buddhist *chaityas*, it has an apsidal plan, although the temple is dedicated to Vishṇu. It was probably built in the seventh century A.D., during the reign of Vikramaditya-Satyaśraya, the first Chālukyan king of this name.<sup>2</sup> About the same time, or a few decades later, was built the well-known Śaiva temple, Pāpanāth, at Paṭṭadakal.<sup>3</sup> Its design comprises a square hall and a square cella with a porch of the same plan between them. The cella has a spire above it, the curvilinear form of which, although copied in the temples at Ālampur in the Raichur District, is more akin to the shape of the spires of Bhuvaneśvar and Koṇārak temples, and also to the form of the majority of spires in North India. The general form of the spires of the Deccan temples is that of a storied building,

<sup>1</sup> Aihole, a village in the Bijāpur district. It is not far from Bādāmi, the old capital of the Chālukyas.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, viii, 285-6.

<sup>3</sup> Paṭṭadakal is ten miles north-east of Bādāmi and eight miles south-west of Aihole.

the dimensions of which gradually decrease as it rises upward. The spires are finally crowned with circular caps and finials of artistic design.

The structural temples of the Deccan, built between the tenth and twelfth centuries A.D., form a magnificent group, and their architectural features exhibit the influence of both North Indian and South Indian temples. The later Chālukyas, the Yādavas, and the Kākatīyas who ruled over the Deccan during this period were fond of architecture, and their buildings are characterized by a breadth of vision and loftiness of spirit on the one hand and by superior craftsmanship on the other. The majority of these temples are dedicated to Śiva, but some belong to the Vaiṣṇavaite cult, while the number of fanes built by Jains is not inconsiderable.

To give the reader a clear idea of the artistic merits and special features of the architecture of the Deccan it will be best to describe some of the typical monuments of the country. Taking the Buddhist shrines first, which are the oldest chronologically, it may be observed that the *stūpas* were perhaps the most sacred, each having been raised on a relic of the mortal remains of the Buddha. Originally the form of the *stūpa* as a burial-mound seems to have been adopted from the hemispherical tumuli of the Scythians,<sup>1</sup> or from the megalithic tombs (cairns) of the aboriginal inhabitants of the Deccan and South India, for such tombs are found in great abundance there. Be this as it may, it is a fact that by the third century B.C., i.e. during the life-time of Aśoka, the *stūpa* had assumed a definite form, i.e. a round base, rising perpendicularly up to a certain height, a dome-shaped structure resting upon this and being itself surmounted by a casket-shaped apex which ultimately was crowned with an umbrella, the emblem of both religious and secular dignity. Round the base of the structure was arranged a path for circumambulation, which was enclosed outwardly by a railing with gateways facing the cardinal points. The Andhra-dēśa, or the country adjoining the deltas of the rivers Kṛishṇā and Godāvārī, was a great stronghold of the Buddhist religion from the third century B.C. down to the sixth or seventh century A.D., and remains of several hundred *stūpas* have been traced in this part of the country, the latest discoveries having been made at Nāgārjunakoṇḍa on the southern bank of the Kṛishṇā, in the present Guntur district of the Madras Presidency.

For the purpose of this chapter a short description of the central *stūpa* at Amarāvati, which was perhaps the most magnificent in this part of the country, will suffice. Unfortunately, the *stūpa* does not exist now. It was in a ruinous condition in 1797, when Colonel Mackenzie first saw it, and since then the bulk of its fragments have been removed to London where they are



and although the *chaitya* at Kārle is the most spacious,<sup>1</sup> and also the most imposing in regard to its architectural detail (Plate VII *b*), yet as its façade has lost many of its original features, a description of the *chaitya* at Beḍsā will be more suitable for the present review because this latter temple is comparatively in a better state of preservation. The plan of this *chaitya* resembles in arrangement to a certain extent the plan of the early Christian churches, comprising the nave, the side-aisles, and the apse containing the *stūpa* or *dagoba*. The side-aisles join in a semi-circular passage behind the *dagoba*. The *chaitya* at Beḍsā has an imposing portico in front of it, the pillars of which rise to a height of 25 ft. and are crowned with figures of animals. Some of these have human riders, the latter being carved with consummate skill. These figures are not only bold in conception but also most vivid in expression (Plate III *b*). The shafts of the pillars are octagonal in design, and they spring from pot-shaped bases and are surmounted with fluted bells which, according to Fergusson, are more Persepolitan in design than the capitals of pillars at any other place in India. The portico, which is in the form of a veranda, measures 30 ft. 2 in. in length and 12 ft. in width. The ceiling, owing to the height of the pillars and side-walls, is too high, but the rich carving attracts the eye at once and the idea of any incongruity does not rise even in the mind of the most discerning critic (Plate VIII *a*). The designs include religious architectural motifs, such as the rail and the *chaitya*-window with its lattice-work; but they are repeated so often, and are carved in such a skilful manner, that the whole looks like a goldsmith's work, and the love of the Deccan artist for richness of ornamentation is abundantly illustrated.

There are two cells at each end of the veranda towards the right and left, the first cell on the latter side being incomplete. They have stone benches, and the jambs of their doors slant slightly inwards, both features indicating the early age of the excavation. Above the lintels of the cell-doors there is first a floral lattice design, and above that the rood-screen pattern, such as is to be seen in original wood in the *chaitya*-windows of Koṇḍāṇe and Bhājā. Access to the interior of the *chaitya* is given by three doors, the middle one of which is larger in dimensions than the two in the sides. The gallery in the sill of the great window, above the main entrance, extends 3 ft. 7 in. into the cave, which, besides the two irregular pillars in front, has twenty-four octagonal shafts, 10 ft. 3 in. high, separating the nave from the side aisles. The entire dimensions of the *chaitya* are: length, 45 ft. 4 in., width, 20 ft. The pillars are plain in design and except for the few religious symbols carved on them, and the rail-pattern executed on the *dagoba*, there is a complete absence of ornamentation in the interior of the shrine, and this

<sup>1</sup> The general dimensions of the interior of this temple are 124 ft. 3 in. from the entrance to the back wall; 45 ft. 6 in. the combined width of the central hall and the side-aisles; and 45 ft. the height from the floor to the rock ceiling.

feature adds to its solemn dignity. The ceiling had originally wooden ribs but these have now completely disappeared. The *dagoba* is rather slim in proportions and differs in general appearance from the *dagobas* of Kārle and Ajanta. Another feature of the carving of the cathedral is that it has no representation of the Buddha, such as is to be seen freely in the *chaityas* of later date—fourth–sixth centuries A.D. Caves XIX and XXVI of Ajanta are excellent examples of the *chaityas* of the late Buddhist period, because they belong to the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. respectively. In these temples the use of wood for the rafters of ceilings, or for the lattice-work of the *chaitya*-window, is entirely discarded; the pillars of the hall rise perpendicularly and the pyramid-shaped parapet does not appear. The pillars are round and they have spiral fluting with bands of floral or jewellery designs arranged at different levels in their height. The figures of the Buddha seated on a throne, or standing, are carved in a variety of poses (*mudras*) in the triforium as well as on the back of the aisles. Representations of the Master may also be noticed in niches carved on the *dagoba* itself. Both the exteriors and interiors of these temples are profusely adorned with sculpture, and the calm and solemn effect of the earlier shrines is replaced by magnificence and splendour. The carving taken by itself is exquisite both in design and workmanship, but its excess in the architectural scheme of the temples wearies the eye and also tends to disturb that tranquillity of mind which one would wish to feel in the interior of a religious shrine (Plates VIII b–IX).

The third type of the early monuments of the Deccan is the *vihāra*, or the monastery evolved from a natural cavern wherein a holy personage dwelt and meditated. The *vihāras* of the pre-Christian period are not only plain but rather austere in design, comprising a middle room with cells arranged on three sides of it. The cells are of small dimensions, and they are connected with the main room by very narrow doors. In the cells benches are cut in the rock, and on one side of them the surface of the rock is kept a little raised to serve the purpose of a pillow for the head when the Buddhist monks slept on these benches. Cave XIII of Ajanta is a very good example of an early Buddhist *vihāra*. Its middle room is  $13\frac{1}{2}$  ft. wide,  $16\frac{1}{2}$  ft. deep, and 7 ft. high. There are seven cells, which project from the main room, three of them being on the left side and two on each of the back and right sides. The monastic life permitted no ostentation, but the love of ornamentation being almost inherent in the people of the Deccan the *bhikshus* began to carve religious symbols, such as the *dagoba*, or the sacred balustrade, or the rood-screen, over the doors of their cells from the earliest times. The *vihāras* at Bhājā, Beḍsā, Junnar, Nāsik, and Ajanta, which all belong to the second or first century B.C., are adorned with such emblems, but the ornamentation shows considerable restraint and there is no lavishness such as is to be noticed in the decoration of the façades of *chaityas* of the same period. As the popularity of the Buddhist faith increased the number of *bhikshus*, the

dimensions of the *vihāras* expanded quickly, and some early monasteries at Kondāṇe and Nāsik have large halls in their centres. At the latter place, caves III and VIII, both of which are monasteries, and according to the inscriptions which they bear belong to the pre-Christian period, have spacious halls, and also pillared verandas in front of them for protection against rain and sun. Cave No. III, which seems to be the earlier of the two, has a hall which is 41 ft. wide and 46 ft. deep. It has also a bench on three sides and seventeen cells; seven on the right side, five at the back, and five on the left. The sculpture and the form of the pillars of these two caves resemble those of the *chaitya*-cave at Kārle, and it will not be wrong to infer that all three belong to the same period.

*Vihāras*, which in the beginning were only monasteries through the religious zeal of the *bhikshus*, developed into temples by the inclusion of an image-chamber in the back of the *vihāra*. Although *dagobas* are carved in some of the earliest *vihāras*, yet the introduction of a shrine with an ante-chamber into the general plan of the *vihāra* seems to have come into vogue when the *Mahāyāna* doctrine permitted the representation of the Buddha in human form for purposes of adoration. At Ajanta, cave IV is perhaps the earliest *vihāra* on this plan, and it has a spacious hall 87 ft. square in the middle with an ante-chamber and a shrine at the back. The large dimensions of this cave, combined with the massiveness of its architectural features (Plate X a), with the frugal use of decorative work, present a faithful picture of Buddhist religious dignity, reflecting the practical restraint of the Buddhist monastic life on the one hand and the expansiveness of spiritual life on the other. The *vihāra* was probably excavated in the third century A.D. or still earlier,<sup>1</sup> but the work on the doorway and the windows may have been done at a later date. At this juncture it should be pointed out that in the early centuries of the Christian era, the first to the third A.D., some structural buildings also in the form of *stūpas*, *chaityas*, and *vihāras* were built in the Deccan. The *chaityas* at Ter, Kondāpur,<sup>2</sup> and Pānigiri<sup>3</sup> belong to this period. They are built of large bricks, but the dimensions of these structures are so small that they can never have been examples of architectural grandeur, even when they were intact. The *chaitya* at Ter has undergone much alteration on account of its having been converted into a temple of another cult, and it is impossible to form any idea of the artistic merits of the original building

<sup>1</sup> This *vihāra* may have been built at the same time as the *chaitya*-cave X at Ajanta, for a temple of colossal size required a large monastery for the accommodation of monks. The ante-chamber and the shrine may have been added at a later date.

<sup>2</sup> Kondāpur is forty-three miles west-north-west of Hyderabad and the best way to approach it is to travel the first thirty-seven miles on the Bidar road and the remaining six by a fair-weather road which has been recently made motorable for the convenience of visitors by the Public Works Department of the Hyderabad State.

<sup>3</sup> Pānigiri is a hillock in the Nalgonda district on which remains of *stūpas* were found in the course of excavations made by the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad during the years 1942-3.

from present appearance. The *chaityas* of Kondāpur which have been exposed to view in the course of excavations carried out by the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad in 1941-2, are of insignificant dimensions, the western *chaitya* measuring 25 ft. 4 in. by 10 ft. 4 in. and the eastern 21 ft. 4 in. by 21 ft. These structures when compared with the grand rock-hewn *chaityas* of Kārle, Bhājā, and Ajanta betray a lack of the lofty idealism and breadth of vision which are to be noticed in the latter *chaityas*.

Apart from structural buildings, the rock-hewn shrines of this period (first to third centuries A.D.) also show no creative effort, the same architectural forms and designs being repeated and the artistic effect being rather one of imitation than of originality. With the waning of the political ascendancy of the Andhras the artistic impulse of the people of the Deccan seems to have deteriorated, and the passing of the sovereignty to the Vākātakas, who came from the north<sup>1</sup> and had matrimonial relations with the Guptas, ultimately proved most useful by breathing a fresh spirit of life into art in all its forms. Further, the rigorous asceticism of the *Hīnayāna* school had in course of time dimmed the original bright outlook on the joys of life, and the introduction of the *Mahāyāna* doctrine during the rule of the Vākātakas, fourth to fifth century A.D., saved the emotional aspect of the art of the Deccan from complete etiolation. The *vihāras* of Ajanta, belonging to this period, bear eloquent testimony to the joyous outlook which the votaries of the Buddhist faith had on the beauty of nature and the aims and ideals of life in general. Among these monasteries caves I-II and XVI-XVII deserve special notice; the last two bear contemporary inscriptions fixing their dates in the last quarter of the fifth century A.D. Cave I is the largest of these four *vihāras*, comprising a porch, a veranda, a hall with corridors on all four sides, an ante-chamber, and a shrine in which a colossal figure of the Buddha is carved. There are also fourteen cells in the interior of this *vihāra* and two in the veranda, one at each end. The veranda is 64 ft. long, 9 ft. wide, and 12 ft. 6 in. high. A large door in the middle, with beautifully carved jambs and entablature, gives access to the great hall which is 64 ft. square, its ceiling being supported by a colonnade of twenty pillars, leaving aisles 9 ft. 6 in. wide all round. The ante-chamber, at the back of the hall, measures 10 ft. by 9 ft. and leads to the shrine through a richly carved door. The shrine is square in plan, measuring 20 ft. on each side.

The exterior view of this monastery has been somewhat marred by the destruction of the porch which was the prominent feature of it, but the several bands of carving on the architrave, representing scenes from the life of the Buddha, elephant-fights, and hunting expeditions, have been executed with consummate skill and show sculpture of a high order.

The pillars in the interior of this cave exhibit much ingenuity both in

<sup>1</sup> In *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, Monograph No. 16, Ghatotkacha Inscriptions, V.V. Mirashi has tried to find their place of origin in the Eastern Deccan.



variety of form and picturesqueness of ornamental detail (Plate X *b*), and these features, combined with the general effect of spaciousness, produced by the large dimensions of the monastery, make it one of the finest *vihāras* of its kind in India. Cave II is almost a replica of cave I, but its hall is a little smaller than that of the latter, and its pillars also do not indicate such a fine sense of proportion as is shown by the columns of cave I. As regards the form of the pillars and the artistic effect of some of the component architectural parts, caves XVI and XVII are superior to cave I, but taken as a whole the latter cave excels them in the beauty of its design. These *vihāras*, caves I-II and XVI-XVII, are adorned with both sculpture and painting, the merits of which will be studied in their appropriate place in this chapter.

The plan of the *vihāra* developed a variety of forms during the period fourth to fifth centuries A.D., according to the aims and ideals and the numerical strength of the monastic orders, and notable types of these plans may be seen in the designs of caves V, XI, and XII of Ellora. They all belong to the Buddhist faith, and although after this religion ceased to exist as a living force in the land of its birth, these *vihāras* were nicknamed *Mahārṇāḍa* or *Dhedaṇḍa*, which name still sticks to them, they constitute one of the most imposing group of monasteries belonging to any faith in India. Among this group caves XI and XII, though called Do Thāl and Tīn Thāl respectively, both consist of three stories and have a spacious court in front which is excavated out of the living rock (Plate XI). Cave V, called the Mahārṇāḍa or the temple of the Mahārs, is 110 ft. deep and 70 ft. wide, if the recesses cut on either side of the aisles be included. The hall is rectangular in plan and is divided into three apartments by two low benches, which may have served as tables for dining purposes or have been used as reading-desks by the *bhikṣhus*, for the cave has twenty cells for the accommodation of the monks and a fairly large number of them would have attended the services of the monastery. The plan of this cave resembles that of the Darbār Hall of Kaṇheri and some experts are of opinion that the *Mahārṇāḍa* may have been originally a refectory, which may account for its plan (Plate XII).

The Do Thāl and the Tīn Thāl, apart from their lofty and massive façades, exhibit a refined taste in the carving of their pillars, which are not crowded with patterns but have the lotus or pot design incised only in outline (Plate XIII *a*) in harmony with the simple dignity of a religious building. These two monasteries in their uppermost story are divided lengthwise into aisles at the ends of which are niches containing representations of the Buddha according to the *Mahāyāna* doctrine. The ante-chamber contains two tall *dvārapālas* with crossed arms and high crowns, and on the back wall three female deities are carved on each side of the door of the shrine. Inside the shrine beside the colossal figure of the Buddha there are statues of the Padmā-pāṇi, Vajrāpāṇi, and other Bodhisattvas, shown as attendants of the Master.

From the top floors of these two *vihāras* the view of the valley and the plains below is grand, and *bhikṣus* sitting for meditation in these caves must have been inspired by the beauty of nature in its various aspects.

These two monasteries apparently belong to the seventh century A.D., because they are situated close to the *chaitya* styled the Viśvakarma, and this, apart from certain architectural features, bears an inscription which on palaeographic grounds has been assigned to the seventh century A.D. The revival of the Brāhmanic faith in the Deccan had begun during the rule of the Chālukyas, who built rock-hewn shrines of that faith at Bādāmi, the seat of their government; but they were tolerant to the followers of the Buddhist religion and the shrines of the latter faith continued to be built under their régime. During the reign of the Rāshtrakūṭas, who ousted the Chālukyas from the greater part of their kingdom in the Deccan, an aggressive religious spirit seems to have prevailed, for they not only converted Buddhist *vihāras* into the temples of their own faith,<sup>1</sup> but also built new shrines on such a grand scale as to eclipse in the eyes of their co-religionists the glory of the Buddhist religion. Religion is often associated with a certain amount of fanaticism, but at Ellora the religious fervour of the followers of the Brāhmanic faith has carved out in the living rock temples which might well have been considered to be the work of gods not only by the votaries of that religion but also by the most discerning critic of the period, because they are unique specimens of this kind of architecture in the world. Their gigantic dimensions, rich decorative detail, and perfect finish, are absolutely amazing. Kailāsa is the most remarkable of these temples; it is monolithic, isolated from the surrounding rock, and carved outside as well as inside. It stands in a large court, 276 ft. long and 154 ft. wide, with a scarp 107 ft. high at the back. In front of this court a curtain has been left, carved on the outside with large statues of Śiva and Viṣṇu, displaying ceaseless activity on the one hand and a sense of urgent vehemence on the other. The entrance to the temple is through a passage which has several apartments, and ultimately leads to the lower part of the court from the two sides of a vestibule arranged at its end. The lower court has the effigies of two life-size elephants carved at either side of the basement of the temple in order to give an air of majesty to the shrine. Two lofty *dhvajastambhas*, ensign staffs, each 45 ft. high, add further dignity to the temple (Plate XIII *b*). The basement of the temple is quite high and it is adorned with sculptures representing episodes from the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* as well as figures of lions and elephants which are very spiritedly represented. The basement measures 164 ft. from east to west, and 109 ft. from north to south, but the temple, in spite of its large dimensions, is designed like a chariot resting on the backs of elephants. The

<sup>1</sup> Cave XV, called the *Daśavatāra*, was originally a Buddhist *vihāra*, and the images of the Buddha, although chiselled off with care from many a niche, may still be noticed in some places. This cave has a long inscription of Dantidurga carved over its entrance.

style is South Indian, developed from the style of the *rathas* of Māmallapuram, but here it appears in such a perfect form that there is nothing missing in the component parts of the temple—such as the portico, the *Nandi* pavilion, the *mandapa*, the shrine, the court with its surrounding galleries and the entrance—which are to be found in a structural temple of this style. According to an inscription it was built by the Rāshtrakūṭa king Kṛishṇa, who succeeded Dantidurga in the latter half of the eighth century A.D.

The main temple has two staircases in front which lead to a porch. The ceiling of the porch has several layers of painting, the undermost being contemporary with the building of the temple. The main hall is 57 ft. wide and 55 ft. deep and the ceiling is supported by sixteen richly carved pillars, which are so arranged that two passages have been formed, one leading from the entrance to the shrine and another crossing the former in the middle of the hall and connecting it with the balconies built at either side of it towards the north and south. The form of the pillars and their decoration show good taste, and as the rock out of which they are hewn is close-grained the carving is extremely sharp, and the floor of the hall is so finely polished that it shines like a mirror.

A door in each of the back corners of the hall leads to the terrace behind. A wide path is arranged there round the outside of the shrine, which forms the base of the *vimāna* or spire. This tower rises to a height of 96 ft. from the court below and is richly carved. Below are compartments between pilasters, with delicately sculptured finials over each, and the middle of each compartment is occupied in most cases by a representation of Śiva or Viṣṇu. On the wall above there are flying figures, and over them begin the horizontal mouldings of the *śikhara*. On the outer side of the terrace are five small shrines crowned by *śikharas*, which with the main spire in the middle give a picturesque effect to the general appearance of the temple.

Kailāsa has several adjuncts some of which may have been excavated at a later date. But the galleries running round the court are coeval with the central shrine, and their architectural effect when the visitor looks at the long rows of columns and the continuous series of sculptured panels from one end of them, is most fascinating (Plate XIV *a*). The eastern gallery is particularly striking; it is 189 ft. in length and has nineteen panels in its back wall adorned with figures of deities of more than human size. Fergusson has compared Kailāsa with the Śaiva temple of Paṭṭadakal, a comparison which may be valid in regard to the close resemblance between the structural features of the two temples, but the very fact that Kailāsa is hewn out of solid rock suggests an idea of solidity and everlastingness which, combined with the impression which it gives of patient industry and continuous devotion to the service of the gods, makes the temple rank in sublimity and grandeur with the great temples of Egypt, like those at Karnak and Edfu.

For vigour of style and boldness of design, the Dhumar Leṇa, cave XXIX

of Ellora, is also worthy of being described here, for it shows what giant strides the architects of the Deccan made under the patronage of the Rāshtrakūṭa kings. The plan of this temple (Plate XIV *b*) has a certain resemblance to that of the great shrine with the Trimūrti at Elephanta, but Dhumar Leṇa is larger in dimensions and finer in architectural effect than the latter cave. The interior of the Dhumar Leṇa measures 148 ft. by 149 ft. and the height of the rock ceiling from the floor is 17 ft. 8 in. From the steps facing the west the visitor first enters a corridor which is connected with the central passage of the shrine as well as with the corridors running on either side of the passage. The side corridors continue to the end of the excavation and form a kind of *pradakṣiṇa* round the shrine. The main passage is crossed in the middle by another which is planned to run from north to south and connects the middle part of the temple with its adjuncts in those directions. These adjuncts comprise a pair of corridors, the outer ones leading to the steps being smaller than those behind them. The plan of the temple, notwithstanding the long aisles into which its interior is divided, is star-shaped, that being the predominant form of the medieval temples of the Deccan. The pillars with their fluted cushion-shaped capitals are a little top-heavy, but owing to the height of the ceiling and the vast spaces of the corridors this blemish is not felt obtrusively, and the general architectural effect of the interior of the temple is one of grandeur and timelessness.

In the eighth century A.D., the period during which the Dhumar Leṇa was excavated, some structural buildings of considerable magnitude were erected in the Deccan, but before reviewing them the Jaina group of rock-hewn shrines at Ellora should also be mentioned because they throw much light on the aims and ideals of the builders who held that faith. In this group of shrines the most notable are the Indra Sabhā and the Jagannātha Sabhā, which in their plans and architectural features show a striking resemblance to the Brāhmanic temples of Ellora. But the various adjuncts of these temples have been so crowded together, and are so overloaded with unnecessary ornamental detail, that the eye is bewildered and fatigued by the complicated intricacy displayed. For instance, in the court of the Indra Sabhā, the *dhvajastambha* is not only close to the door of the temple but also so near the central pavilion of the court that the whole looks cramped and confined. This effect is further enhanced by the small dimensions of the court and the tiny size of the pillars of some of the chapels which overlook it. These characteristics betray a sad lack of sense of proportion in the general design of the temple, although the architectural detail taken separately exhibits considerable industry and skill. Art in such instances is degraded into artifice, because the creative effort is replaced by a soulless striving after effect.

In studying the structural monuments of the Deccan, it will be helpful to keep in view also the political history of the country. It has been observed

above<sup>1</sup> that the Andhras were followed by the Vākāṭakas, who came from the provinces to the north of the Deccan and had matrimonial relations with the Guptas. During their rule of some two hundred years (A.D. 300-500) many architectural decorative features of North India were adopted in the Deccan. The next dynasty to rule there was that of the Chālukyas, who extended their kingdom both in the north and in the south and were often at war with the Pallavas of Kāñchī, the modern Conjeevaram. Their capital was first at Bādāmi (Vātāpipura), now a small town in the Bijāpur District. Apart from the rock-cut shrines which the Chālukyas built at Bādāmi in imitation of the Buddhist temples, they constructed several fanes of great magnitude in the suburbs of their capital, which may still be seen at Paṭṭadakal and Aihole. The Lokeśvara temple at Paṭṭadakal bears inscriptions of the Chālukyan king Vikramāditya II (A.D. 733-46), stating that this temple was built for his queen Lokamahādevī, in memory of his having thrice conquered the Pallavas of Kāñchī.<sup>2</sup> The temple bears a striking resemblance to the contemporary Rājasimheśvara temple of Kāñchī, and there is a copper-plate grant of the reign of Kīrtivarman II (A.D. 746-57) which mentions that his father (Vikramāditya II) was much impressed by the sculpture of the latter shrine and probably had it overlaid with gold.<sup>3</sup> It is likely that the magnificence of the Rājasimheśvara temple induced Vikramāditya to take some of the master-builders of Kāñchī with him to his own capital at Bādāmi. This conjecture receives support from two inscriptions on the eastern gateway of the Lokeśvara, one of them clearly stating that the builder of the shrine was 'the most eminent *sutradhārī* of the southern country'.

At one time the Pallavas also invaded the territory of the Chālukyas and reduced the capital, Bādāmi. But this state of affairs did not last long, and the Chālukyas soon regained their supremacy in the Deccan. In the middle of the eighth century A.D. the Chālukyas were, however, routed by another dynasty, the Rāshtrakūṭas, and their western territory, the Karnataka-*deśa*, was permanently lost to them. At Paṭṭadakal there is an inscription of the Rāshtrakūṭa king, Dhruva, stating that he humbled the pride of the Pallavas also, who, it appears, had taken advantage of the disruption of the Chālukyan kingdom to extend their territories within the borders of its former dominions.

The Rāshtrakūṭas were evidently fascinated by the architecture of the temples built at Aihole and Paṭṭadakal by the masons of Kāñchī, because the great rock-hewn shrine of Kailāsa built at Ellora by Kṛishṇa I, in the middle of the eighth century A.D., is almost a copy of the Lokeśvara temple at Paṭṭadakal. It is not unlikely that the king employed sculptors of South India in building the Kailāsa.

The later Chālukya kings as well as the Rāshtrakūṭas were favourably

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 15.

<sup>3</sup> *South Indian Inscriptions*, i, 146.

<sup>2</sup> *Indian Antiquary*, x, 162.

inclined towards the Jaina religion, and there are inscriptions extant which show that both rock-hewn and structural temples of this faith were built under the patronage of the kings of these two dynasties. In A.D. 973 the Rāshtrakūṭas were ousted by Taila II, a scion of the Chālukya family, who established his government at Kalyāṇī. The descendants of Taila ruled from there until A.D. 1161, when the country was temporarily occupied by the Kalachuris, whose seat of government was first at Annigiri and was afterwards shifted to Kalyāṇī. The *lingayat* cult sprang up during the short reign of the Kalachuris, who, however, could not crush the Chālukyas, and they regained possession of the throne for some years during which time several kings of the dynasty ruled until A.D. 1189. But they had become so feeble that the southern part of their territory was occupied by the Hoysalas and the northern by the Yādavas of Devagiri. The Yādavas ruled from A.D. 1187 to 1310, when the country was overrun by Malik Kāfur, a general of the Delhi Sultan, 'Alā-ud-Dīn Khaljī.

In this historical review, however brief, it is necessary to mention the Kākatīyas, who in the beginning were vassals of the Chālukyan kings of Kalyāṇī and when the latter were dispossessed by the Kalachuris, the Kākatīyas became independent and the dynasty gradually rose into power and ruled over a large part of the Deccan for nearly three centuries. The last important king of the dynasty was Pratāpa Rudra II, whose dominions extended as far as the Western Ghāṭs, and from the Godāvarī to the Pālār river. Muḥammad bin Tughluq conquered Telīngāna during the reign of this king and sent Pratāpa a prisoner to Delhi, but eventually he was allowed to return to Warangal and to rule as a vassal of the Delhi kings. The Kākatīyas were fond of architecture, and as they had sprung from the Chālukyas and were also allied by marriage with the Cholas of South India, it is natural that their temples should show a happy blending of the styles of North India and South India in their construction.

For the reasons given above it becomes clear that from the close of the third century A.D. up to the beginning of the fourteenth, the Deccan, owing to its political conditions, was influenced in artistic matters by both North and South India. To demonstrate this influence in the domain of architecture the salient features of the temples built during this period are given below. The Lokeśvara or Virūpāksha temple of Paṭṭadakal, referred to several times above, is one of the oldest structural temples of the Deccan and has a striking resemblance to its earlier prototype, the Rājasimheśvara temple of Kāñchī. The type of architecture is pure Pallava evolved from the wooden *ratha* style, the earlier examples of which may be noticed in the rock-hewn shrines of Māmallapuram. The spire consists of a square pyramid; divided into distinct stories which decrease in dimensions as they rise one above the other and are ultimately crowned with a round tower. The storied or horizontal arrangement of the spire is a Pallava or South Indian

feature, while the North Indian spire has a perpendicular arrangement, the reduplication being obtained by vertical additions, clustering round the main structure of the spire. The architects of the Deccan in building their spires adopted a middle course; whilst retaining the storied arrangement of South India, they reduced the height of the stories but increased their number, and covered them with so great a profusion of ornamental detail that at first glance the storied arrangement itself is not apparent to the eye. Again, to make the spires resemble their prototypes in Northern India, the architects so manœuvred the central panels, or niches on each story, as to form a more or less continuous vertical band, thus simulating the perpendicular arrangement of the North. The spire of the Mahādeva temple at Ittagi, in the Raichur District (Plate XV *a*), built in A.D. 1112, shows a middle course, but the spires of the temples of Ālampur, constructed about the same period (twelfth century A.D.), are so ingeniously overladen with decorative detail that they appear to be almost replicas of the Liṅgarājā temple at Bhuvaneśvar, in Orissa (Plate XV *b*).

The internal plans of the temples of the Deccan comprise a shrine room, which generally faces the east with an ante-chamber in front of it, and a pillared hall adjoining the latter. The pillared halls of the temples in the south-western parts of the Deccan are generally screened and have windows of pleasing design for the admission of air and light (Plate XVI *a*). The halls of the northern and eastern parts of the Deccan are open, in imitation of the temple-halls of Northern India. As the majority of the shrines of the Deccan are dedicated to Śaivite worship, the plan of the building includes a separate hall or a projection in the main building itself, for the accommodation of the sacred bull, *Nandi*, the vehicle of Śiva. Further, the temples of the North and East Deccan have porches on three sides of the building which give the plan a star-shaped appearance, this being a special feature of Deccanese shrines. The ceiling of the interior of the building is generally flat, being divided into compartments by beams resting on the capitals of pillars supporting the roof. These compartments are square in plan, and where the space occupied by them is large, the architects have inserted triangular slabs at the angles of the squares for the greater safety of the building. This device has a pleasing effect because it removes the flatness of the ceiling which otherwise would have been apparent. The plan of the ceiling in some compartments is sixteen-sided, a device which has been carried out by the insertion of triangular pieces at the angles. The artistic effect of this plan is further enhanced by the rich carving of the masonry (Plate XVI *b*).

The ceiling of the central apartment of the hall is often dome-shaped, but it is not built of voussoirs with radiating joints. On the contrary it is constructed of ring upon ring of stones laid with horizontal or level bedding, each ascending ring being smaller than the lower, and closing in towards the top, which is covered by a single circular slab. These rings are held in position

by the immense weight of roofing material above them pressing down upon the supporting walls of the dome all round. The inside of the vault is carved into ascending concentric circles, each circle being beautifully cusped with a graceful pendant hanging from the apex, or with a rosette or some other pleasing design carved thereon.

The pillars of the Deccan temples show a large variety of designs, and in workmanship and artistic effect they far surpass the pillars of the temples elsewhere in both North and South India, the exceptional skill and refined taste of the sculptors of the Deccan being largely due to their continuous practice of, and long tradition in, stone-carving, stretching back for many centuries, as is proved by the existence of the early rock-hewn shrines in this region. The stone used for pillars is dolerite, which runs in trap-dykes like a backbone across the granite hills, and has a jet-black or greenish hue. The early men of the Deccan used it for their implements, and their heavy hand-axes, chisels, and other chipped or polished tools are all made of this stone. It is close-grained and takes a beautiful polish. Some authorities are of opinion that the pillars were actually turned on a lathe in order to secure this polished surface. This may be true, but the pillars of the main hall of the rock-hewn shrine, Kailāsa, which shine like a mirror, cannot have been turned on a lathe, the temple being monolithic. The fact is that the craftsmen of the Deccan had acquired consummate skill both in carving and in polishing stone from the early centuries of the Christian era onwards. The sculpture on some pillars is so sharp and crisp that it might have been finished only yesterday. The facets, the floral designs, and the religious motifs are all deeply cut; the human figures stand out from the main surface of the stone, while some floral designs have an almost fringe-like effect, being connected with the shaft only at one end, with the major part of the carving almost detached (Plates XVII-XVIII). For deep-cut carving the temple of Ittagi is perhaps unique, but in polish the pillars of some of the temples in Teliṅgāna, notably those at Pālampet and Pillalmari, are superior to those of the Karnatak shrines.

The architraves, door-frames, and friezes above them are also richly carved, and they all illustrate the immense devotion and masterly skill of the architects in building and adorning the abodes of their gods. The walls are built of large slabs of masonry and they have a double shell, the core being hollow in the middle. This method of building is exposed to view where the outer shell of the wall has been destroyed by climatic or other causes. As the foundations of the walls have not been laid deeply enough, sinkage has occurred freely, causing the ruin of many temples. Even those which have survived have broken lintels, cracked walls, and out-of-plumb columns, this unfortunate state of affairs being entirely due to the insecure nature of the foundations.

The temples of the northern parts of the Deccan have lofty stylobates,



like those of the contemporary temples of North India, but the fanes of the Karnataka-*deśa* have basements of moderate height, intended to keep the floor immune from the damp of the surrounding ground during the rainy season. The cornices (*chhajjas*) are deep and curved like those of the South Indian temples, and in some shrines they have figure-brackets for their support. The brackets of the great temple of Pālampet in the Warangal District represent dancing-girls in significant poses, showing both rich imagination and skilful workmanship. The cornices are sometimes ribbed and divided into panels in imitation of the cornices of a wooden *ratha*.<sup>1</sup>

To illustrate the above remarks, which are more or less general, a description of a few important temples in the Deccan, with plans and photographs, is given below. To begin with the temples of the South-West Deccan, the Mahādeva temple of Itagi may be noticed first, because it is considered to be the finest temple of its kind in that part of the country. It is situated some three miles to the south of Banikop station on the M.S.M. Railway, between Bellary and Gadag. The village was until recently included in Nawāb Sālār Jung's *jagīr* in the Raichur District of the Hyderabad State. The plan of the temple comprises a shrine with an ante-chamber, a closed hall with porches on either side of it towards the north and south, and a pillared hall which is open at the sides. The temple faces the rising sun, and the great open hall at the east end was originally supported upon sixty-eight pillars. Twenty-six of these are large ones, standing on the floor and forming the main support of the roof: the rest, which were shorter, stood on the stone bench surrounding the hall, and carried the sloping eaves. The large columns are of different designs, but are arranged symmetrically with regard to the shape and pattern of each. The four central ones have angular carving arranged vertically both in the shafts and capitals; the design, although very rich (Plate XVIII *a*), seems quite in harmony with the elaborate pattern of the other architectural parts of the building. For instance, the slabs of the ceiling of the middle apartment of the hall have been carved into a rich arrangement of hanging arabesque foliage, and *makaras*<sup>2</sup> which spring from the jaws of a *kirtimukha* mask.<sup>3</sup> The convolutions of the design with their circling excrescences and bewildering whorls form a most luxuriant pattern. The inner hall, which is closed, measures 27 feet on each side, and beside the entrance from the outer hall has also doorways towards the north and the south which are richly adorned with sculpture. The exterior of the temple has deteriorated considerably and the carved masonry of the outer casing of the walls has been carried away by the villagers for use as building material for their own houses. The top of the *sikhara* is also

<sup>1</sup> A canopied chariot used for taking the gods round the streets on the occasion of a religious festival. They are profusely carved and may be seen to this day in all towns, and also in certain villages, of Southern India.

<sup>2</sup> *Makaras*, dragon-shaped flowing motifs.

<sup>3</sup> *Kirtimukha*, a conventional lion's head.

missing, and the spire as it now stands is divided into three stories which are quite distinct and not so cut up and masked by decorative detail as in the temples at Ālampur.<sup>1</sup> The little cusped niches, which decorate the centre of each story, rising one above the other, are exceedingly handsome, and the deep canopy of the roll moulding, which is pointed with little hanging buds, is designed in very graceful curves. Their delicate lace-like workmanship is further enhanced by the background of the rich, dark shadows of the niches.

These beautiful wreaths of filigree are repeated as ornament in the recessed panels of the walls below, and in two cases, one on either side of the shrine, serve as window-frames, the spaces between the rolls forming the lights. The three principal niches on the shrine walls, boldly accentuated by their deep projecting cornices, are now empty, their images having disappeared. Through the neglect of centuries the temple had fallen into a sad state of disrepair, but soon after the establishment of the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad it was thoroughly repaired by means of a liberal grant made by the State's Government, although the temple, as was stated above, was situated in the *jāgīr* of Nawāb Sālār Jung Bahādur.

According to the inscription carved on a slab the temple was built by Mahādeva, a high military officer, *Daṇḍanāyaka*, of the Eastern Chālukyan king, Vikramāditya VI, in the Śaka year 1034 (A.D. 1112). In the inscription the temple is styled *devālaya chakravartī*, 'a very emperor among temples', a title which it amply deserves in view of the magnificence of its architectural style and its luxuriant decorative detail.

In passing from Ittagi to Ālampur, a town situated in the same district, that is Raichur,<sup>2</sup> but some 150 miles to the north-east of the former place, one notices a marked change in the shape of the spire, which is more akin to the towers of the temples in Orissa than to those in South India. There are several shrines at Ālampur and their *śikhara*s have a curvilinear form outwardly, the storied arrangement having been concealed by a profusion of miniature architectural devices, such as pillars, niches, windows, and *āmalakas*,<sup>3</sup> which have been arranged one above the other vertically (Plate XV *b*). The halls of these temples are closed, and in their plans they resemble the rock-cut shrines of the Deccan, with a central passage, a nave, and aisles on either side of it. The shrine is built in the form of a square chamber at the end of the central passage and the two aisles extend round the shrine and serve the purpose of a *pradakṣiṇā* for the votaries (Plate XIX *a*). The designs of the pillars of the hall and the figures of the *apsaras* carved on the exterior of the temple further show the influence of the rock-hewn architecture of the Deccan (Plate XIX *b*). The general style of these temples is

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 22.

<sup>2</sup> Ālampur is the headquarters of a *tāluk* and may be approached from Hyderabad or Kurnool. It is situated on the metre-gauge line of the N.S. Railway, between Secunderabad and Dronachalam.

<sup>3</sup> *Āmalaka*, a fluted capital.

very pleasing, and except for the elaborate detail of the carving of the *śikhara* the architectural features exhibit a refined taste. The temples at Ālampur, according to the inscriptions carved on them, were built during the twelfth century A.D.

Almost contemporary with the temples of Ālampur are the shrines at Anwa and Aundha in the Northern Deccan, both situated on the bank of an old stream which had its source in the Ajanta Hills<sup>1</sup> not far above Anwa and joined the Godāvarī somewhere near Jalna.<sup>2</sup> Both the temples are very typical of their respective styles. The temple at Anwa has a lofty plinth, and its stylobate, the arrangement of its short pillars, and the circular design of the roof, are very artistic. The vault of the roof is 21 ft. in diameter, and is supported on twelve richly carved pillars with eight smaller ones interspersed. It is horizontal in construction as well as in ornamentation, and the general effect is quite elegant, although the vault has no pendant in the middle such as is generally found in such domes. The temple had much decayed and was overgrown with trees which had been the main cause of the ruin of the building, but the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad has since its establishment thoroughly repaired the building and saved it from further deterioration.

The temple at Aundha is much larger in dimensions than its rival at Anwa, but the spire of the former is modern, having been built after the original spire had completely disappeared. The basement of the building and the walls up to roof level are original, and they are built of large blocks of masonry richly carved. The temple itself has a plinth 5 ft. 6 in. high, and its entire length from the west portico to the back of the shrine is 126 ft., while the breadth from the north portico to the southern one is 118 ft. The inner plan consists of the icon-room and a hall with porticos in three directions, as a result of which arrangement the interior has a star-like shape. This form has been further accentuated by the angular projections in the exterior of the building, and the whole has a very artistic effect (Plate XX). The temple at Aundha bears a close resemblance, in both structural and decorative features, to the famous shrine at Halebid (Plate XXI), regarding the architectural beauty of which Fergusson has observed as follows:

It must not, however, be considered that it is only for patient industry that this building is remarkable. The mode in which the eastern face is broken up by the larger masses, so as to give height and play of light and shade, is a better way of accomplishing what the Gothic architects attempted by transepts and projections. This, however, is surpassed by the western front, where the variety of outline, and the arrangement and subordination of the various facets in which it is disposed, must be considered as a masterpiece of design in its class. If the frieze of gods were

<sup>1</sup> The other towns situated on the stream are Assaye and Jā'farābād. Jā'farābād must have also an early Hindu name, because it abounds in ancient remains of the pre-Muslim period.

<sup>2</sup> Anwa may be approached both from Golegāon, a village on the Aurangābād-Ajanta road, and from Bhokardan, a *tāluk* town in the Aurangābād District.

spread along a plain surface, it would lose more than half its effect, while the vertical angles, without interfering with the continuity of the frieze, give height and strength to the whole composition. The disposition of the horizontal line of the lower friezes is equally effective. Here again the artistic combination of horizontal with vertical lines and the play of outline and of light and shade, far surpass anything in Gothic art. The effects are just what the medieval architects in Europe were aiming at, but which they never attained so perfectly as was done in the Deccan.<sup>1</sup>

There are several bronze images in the shrine, but the chief icon, which has given so much importance to the temple, is a *jyotirlinga*, *jyotis*, light regarded as the supreme spirit. It is one of the twelve *lingas* of its kind scattered in various parts of India and held in great reverence by the votaries of the Śaivite cult.

The temples both at Anwa and Aundha in regard to their high plinths, the arrangement of their short pillars, and the style of their basement mouldings, are reminiscent of the temples in North Gujarat and Central India, notably the *Teli-ka Mandir* at Gwalior and the Mahādeva temple at Khajurāho, Chhatarpur State.

The temples in the eastern part of the Deccan are as numerous as are those in the south or the north, but they possess certain features which place them in contrast with their rivals in the latter two parts of the plateau. For instance, the ceilings of the central apartments of their halls are not circular; they are eight-sided or sixteen-sided, the latter shapes being secured by placing triangular pieces at the angles of the main design. The spires do not have the curvilinear form of the north noticed in the temples at Ālampur; nor do they have the pyramidal or the bombe shape of the *gopurams* of the south. They rise perpendicularly in a tapering form in which the vertical arrangement remains prominent, and there is no clustering of decorative detail to conceal the original design or to tire the eye. The plinths are high, but the effect of precipitousness has been judiciously avoided by building platforms midway in the height of the basement, and this arrangement has on the one hand given strength to the entire structure by serving as a sort of girdle or buttress, and on the other has provided a *pradakshina* on which the votaries could walk round the temple and enjoy the beautiful sculpture of the exterior of the shrine.

The most important of these temples, like those at Hanamkonda, or Pālampet, or even the incomplete one in the Warangal Fort, show a vigorous style of architecture in which breadth of vision and loftiness of religious ideals are amply demonstrated. To illustrate this view a description of the Great Temple at Pālampet may be given. The main building of this temple has porches towards the north, the south, and the east, but the principal entrance faces the east, for in the same direction a hall is built on a platform

<sup>1</sup> J. Fergusson and Burgess, *History of Indian Architecture*, i, 448.

which rises 6 ft. 4 in. above the ground, and its plinth is divided into bands and grooves occurring alternately, the motif being taken from the rocky banks of a river the sides of which are worn away in a similar style by the continuous action of the waves. The platform affords a space 10 ft. wide all round the temple, forming a sort of promenade for devout pilgrims whence they may gaze on the long rows of figures which adorn the exterior of the building. These figures are of a heterogeneous character, comprising gods, goddesses, warriors, acrobats, musicians, dancing-girls, and *maithuna* pairs in indecent attitudes.

A striking peculiarity of this building is formed by the figure-brackets, which spring from the shoulders of the outer pillars of the temple and nominally support the *chhajja* slabs. They are mere ornaments and represent the intermediate stage between their earlier analogues at Sāñchī and the later examples at Vijayanagar. Twelve of them represent dancing-girls in different poses, the carving showing considerable artistic merit both in conception and in execution.

The walls of the sanctuary are decorated outwardly with pilasters and niches, the latter being crowned with miniature spires, copies of the main spire of the temple.

To enter the temple from any of the three porches the visitor has to ascend several steps, as the floor of the building is 5 ft. higher than the platform on which it stands. The arrangement of the interior can best be understood with the help of the plan (Plate XXII). The main hall measures 41 ft. each way, and has a square apartment enclosed by four pillars in the middle—the place where musicians and singers recited the sacred hymns. The carving of the pillars is most elegant and it represents scenes from the *Purāṇas*. The idyllic scene of Kṛishṇa surrounded by a troop of amorous girls (*gopīs*), whom the mischievous god deprived of their garments while they were bathing in a tank, is carved on a pillar of the central apartment. A platform about 3 ft. 6 in. high is built round the hall and on it are eight beautifully constructed niches which originally must have accommodated the images of the presiding deities of the temple. The front of the antechamber and the entrance of the shrine are richly carved, and the main icon in the interior of the latter is a *linga*, the emblem of cosmic energy. The general architectural effect of the temple is grand, and shows the high ideals and consummate skill of the builders.

A sad defect of these temples is that they are not provided with adequate foundations, and as they were built of large blocks of masonry sinkage has occurred in the majority of cases, so that cracked walls, broken lintels, and out-of-plumb walls are features which frequently obtrude themselves on one's notice.

The temple at Pālampet has an inscription dated A.D. 1213, which records the building of the temple by one Recherla Rudra, a general in the service

of the Kākatīya king Gaṇapati. This king built the great tank at Pākhal and also the magnificent temple in the Warangal fort, some features of which have recently been exposed to view by the excavations carried out by the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad. The temple was built of large blocks of neatly chiselled masonry, and the fondness of the Kākatīya architects for using large slabs may be judged from the floor of the central apartment of the temple, which consists of a single stone 2 ft. thick measuring 16 ft. on each side. Further, the floor is beautifully polished and shines like a mirror. Another interesting feature of this temple is the four gateways which face the four cardinal points of the compass and in their design are reminiscent of the *toranas* of the Great Stūpa of Sāñchī, one gateway, at least, of which was built by the masons of the Deccan.<sup>1</sup> It appears that the tradition of building gateways in this style continued in the Deccan down to the thirteenth century A.D.

The architecture of the Deccan, as represented by its structural temples built from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries A.D., is conventional to a degree, and also betrays a lack of spontaneity, but none can deny its magnificence, nor can anyone ignore the rich imagination, patient industry, and skilful workmanship of the builders of these temples.

<sup>1</sup> According to an inscription the Southern Gateway of the Sāñchī Stūpa was built by the sculptors of the Andhra king, Śrī-Satkarni, whose reign has been dated by scholars in the first half of the second century B.C.

### III

## SCULPTURE

WE pass on to the history of Deccanese sculpture. There exist both in the eastern and western parts of the territory, which was once under the sway of the Andhras, specimens of a well-developed art dating back to the second century B.C. Its virility, its plastic beauty, its high intellectual qualities, and its skilful technique must have taken a couple of millenniums to reach that standard. As evidence for this view a few specimens from the sculpture of the *chaityas* at Kondāṇe, Bhājā, Beḍṣā, and Kārle, situated in the western parts of the Andhra kingdom, and Amarāvati in the eastern territory, may be described. The *chaitya* at Kondāṇe has a highly ornamented façade the design of which is essentially wooden in form and derivation (Plate II a). The projecting balconies supported by curvilinear brackets and the windows filled with lattice-work, although carved in stone, are absolutely wooden in form, and they accord well with the real woodwork of the main arch, fragments of which are still *in situ*. In the third row of balconies, carved along the springing points of the central arch, there are panels containing dancing figures. Of these panels there are four on each side of the arch, and those on the left side are comparatively in a better state of preservation.<sup>1</sup> In the latter series the first panel contains three figures, a cavalier armed with a large bow being in the middle, and two dancing girls, one on each side of him. The girls have poised themselves to dance with their gay companion, apparently by turns, for in the first panel the girl on the right holds the fringe of the cavalier's girdle in a loving manner while he is amorously stretching out his left arm to touch her chin. The body lines of both male and female figures show a rhythm suggestive of movement, while the vitality of the man and the happy serenity expressed by the girl make them seem almost living. The girl on the left has also poised herself and taken a short step with a view to joining her partner in the dance when her turn shall come. The second and third panels show the cavalier engaged in dancing with each of his two partners in succession. The attitudes of the dancers are pleasing, displaying a mood of amorous dalliance through the swing of the body and other gestures. In the fourth panel the cavalier stands by himself with a smile on his lips, and is inclining his body in a graceful gesture as if to acknowledge the applause which has been showered upon him by the spectators for his successful performance. Apart from the dramatic effect,

<sup>1</sup> Photographs of these panels were taken at the author's request by Mr. Q. M. Moneer, in 1941-42, the then Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey, Western Circle, and they are studied and published for the first time in this book.

there is so much grace and beauty in the carving of these four panels that their art in its intellectual qualities and technical skill must have needed the practice and cultural development of many centuries before it could reach such perfection of craftsmanship (Plates IV-V).

In this cave there is an inscription in Brahmī characters of the second century B.C., if not of an earlier period. The inscription records the name of one Balaka, the pupil of Kanha (or Kṛishṇā), who made the cave. The record is carved near the head of a statue which probably represents Balaka (Plate XXIII). The statue has been much knocked about and nothing now survives except a part of the head. This head is covered with an embroidered scarf, which is tied near the forehead with a band of the same design. The figure probably had long hair which was gathered above the head, as is shown by protuberance in its upper part.

In the centuries preceding the Christian era dancing was a popular art, as indeed it remained also afterwards, being encouraged and fostered by the rituals of the Buddhist and Brāhmanic faiths. The sculptor has therefore included dancing pairs in the decorative schemes of the exteriors of the early *chaityas*. In the interior Buddhist religious convention did not, perhaps, permit him to exhibit his skill in the representation of the lighter and more frivolous aspects of human life. In the *chaitya* at Kārle also there are some panels containing dance scenes. The stone being not close grained, the figures are a little rough in finish, but the joyous carefree attitude and the rhythm of movement are marvellous, and exhibit a highly developed art. The features as well as the dress which is, however, extremely scanty, show the dancers to be inhabitants of the Deccan, and the art is thus indigenous (Plate XXIV *a-b*). In their head-gear and ornaments the dancers show a certain resemblance to the people represented in the carvings at Sāñchī and Bharhut, but they have no rigidity such as is generally to be noticed in the statuary of the latter two places; on the contrary the movement and lifelike effect of the dancers of Kārle exhibit a much more fully developed art.

The row of columns crowned by figures of elephant-riders is another feature of the art of the sculptor in this cave (Plate XXV *a-b*). The rampant elephants with their little twinkling eyes and gracefully carved trunks exhibit the ingenuity of the artist in the choice of pose and the enlivening of expression, while the riders, who are generally in pairs and have a gay and debonair appearance, show that according to the sculptor's ideals human life cannot be complete without the enjoyment of its pleasures.

The *chaitya* at Kārle has several inscriptions covering a period of fifty or more years, during which the ornamentation of the cave with carving must have been going on continuously. The earliest, however, mentions the name of some Sātavāhana kings who ruled in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era, and the sculpture of this cave is not much later in date than its analogue at Kondāṇe, described above. Almost coeval with, or



slightly earlier in date than, the pillars of the Kārle *chaitya* are the columns of the veranda of the Buddhist rock-cut temple at Beḍṣā,<sup>1</sup> but they are much larger in dimensions than their prototypes at Kārle, and the figures of animals and their riders carved on the abaci are not only colossal in size but most spirited in artistic effect. The main shafts of the columns are octagonal in design, being 3 ft. 4 in. in girth and 25 ft. in height. They taper slightly as they rise from pot-shaped bases, and are crowned by ogee capitals of Persepolitan type, grooved vertically. Upon the capitals are fluted tori enclosed in a square frame over which lie four thin tiles, each projecting above the one below (Plate VII *a*). At the top, immediately below the entablature, are carved rampant elephants, horses, bullocks, and mythical animals, with male and female human riders perched on them. The second column from the left has two horses with their heads and bodies facing in opposite directions. On one of them a *rājā* or *yaksha* is riding and on the other his consort. The figures of horses carved in the early Buddhist monuments are generally crude in form, but here they are very realistic, and their glistening eyes, up-raised ears and manes, and almost quivering nostrils and parted lips show their sprightly character and impatient nature under their riders, who have apparently placed their hands on the animals' heads in order to quiet them. The human figures have also been carved with considerable realistic effect; the pair appear as if in a love-making mood, the *yaksha* holding one of the tresses of his mistress while she has thrown one of her arms round his back. Romantic affection is shown in the countenances of both, and the same feeling is expressed by the inclination of their heads and the general disposition of their bodies (Plate III *b*). The sculpture in consideration of its large size and artistic effect may be compared favourably with the best in the world. The *chaitya* cave at Beḍṣā also has an inscription which on palaeographic grounds has been assigned by epigraphists to the second or first century B.C., but the art represented by the sculpture of the cave is so advanced that to attain that standard must have required the intellectual and technical progress of hundreds of years.

In describing the sculpture of the eastern zone of the Deccan it should be observed that the country near the deltas of the rivers Godāvarī and Kṛishṇā was the cradle of Andhra art and culture from the earliest times, and some of the antiquities of the town of Amarāvati, ancient Dharanikota (16° 35' N., 80° 24' E.), date back to the second century B.C. There are other old towns, like Jagayyapet, Bhattiprolu, and Nāgārjunakoṇḍa, all situated at short distances from one another, which were important centres of the Buddhist religion from about the third century B.C. to the fifth century A.D. As the

<sup>1</sup> Beḍṣā (Poona District) is approached by a cart track beginning at the twenty-eighth milestone of the Poona-Bombay road. In 1941, immediately after his tour of investigation in Western India, the writer approached the Government of Bombay with a request that they should build a motor road to make access easy to the Buddhist monuments of this place.

sculpture of Amarāvati is the most typical of Andhra art, it will be sufficient to study it in preference to that of other places in the neighbourhood. The *stūpa* of Amarāvati, described already (*supra*, pp. 10-11), exists no longer, but its sculpture, which is housed safely in India at the Madras Museum and in England at the British Museum, has been praised in unstinted terms by competent authorities for its beauty and workmanship. Fergusson's opinion that the sculptures of Amarāvati mark 'the culmination of Indian art', however, was not accepted by Vincent Smith, but he has agreed with Havell in stating that the marbles of Amarāvati present 'delightful studies of animal life, combined with extremely beautiful conventionalized ornament', and that 'the most varied and difficult movements of the human figures are drawn and modelled with great freedom and skill'.<sup>1</sup> Further, both Fergusson and Vincent Smith have pointed out a strong Hellenistic influence in the development of the style, but Havell has rightly observed that except for a few borrowed details and motifs to be seen here and there, it is essentially Indian both in artistic expression and in technique and that there is nothing foreign in the general style. Havell did not apparently see the sculptures of Kondāne, Beḍṣā, and Kārle, studied above (*supra*, pp. 30-32), otherwise instead of observing that the style of Amarāvati showed 'developments of the Bharhut and Sāñchī school' he would have remarked that the style was Deccanese in origin and evolved from the earlier phase of Andhra art.<sup>2</sup> The delight of the sculptor in the mobility of his figures, his anxiety to convey the idea of volume, his love of ornamentation in the execution of even minor detail, and above all his joyous outlook upon life are characteristics which are to be noticed frequently in the early sculpture of the Deccan and which found fuller expression at Amarāvati partly through the religious stories of the Buddhist faith, and partly through the zeal, devotion, and rich imagination of its votaries during a period of 300 years—first century B.C. to second century A.D.

The sculptures of Amarāvati for the purpose of study may be divided into four main classes. First the animal frieze carved on the plinth of the railing, second the medallions and circular disks of the upright posts, third the wavy scrolls carved on the coping, and fourth the bas-reliefs of the *stūpa* itself. The *stūpa* according to some inscriptions was built in the second century B.C., but it was extended, adorned, and encased with fresh bas-reliefs during the following four or five centuries, and the greatest decorative schemes were carried out during the period A.D. 150-250. Taking the earliest sculptures first, there are some fragments of the original plinth of the railing, which represent a frieze containing mythical animals interspersed with human figures. The human figures are shown as herdsmen, holding the animals by their tails or ears, and exhibiting considerable energy in controlling

<sup>1</sup> V. A. Smith, *History of Fine Art*, p. 155.

<sup>2</sup> E. B. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, p. 102.

them. The subject closely resembles in design the painted frieze in cave IX of Ajanta,<sup>1</sup> and the carved band in cave VI at Kuda.<sup>2</sup> The latter two subjects belong to the first or second century B.C., and the frieze of Amarāvati may be assigned to the same period. The figure of the winged beast resembling a lion seems to have been copied from an Assyrian prototype, and it was on the basis of such similarities in a few motifs that Vincent Smith and Fergusson sought to prove the influence of Western Asiatic countries on the art of Amarāvati. Indian art at this period, however, was more highly developed than the art of any other country in Asia, and the assimilation of a few foreign motifs through the early conversions of *Pahlavas* and *Sakas* to Buddhism could not have vitally affected the originality of the Indian artists either in spirit or technique. In Plate XXVI*a* the herdsman in his dress, features, and pose is Indian through and through, and winged animals have been introduced either as a curiosity, or to show the extraordinary ability of the herdsman to keep under control even fabulous monsters. The lotus creeper design carved in the form of a band above the central subject (Plate XXVI *b*) is again purely Indian, as regards both its intricate arrangement and its skilful workmanship.

Lotus designs occupying the circular or semi-circular panels of the upright posts of the railing (Plate XXVII *a*) exhibit greater dexterity and a more developed and refined art, which ultimately influenced the Gupta sculpture of Central and Northern India and also the sculpture of the Deccan, as is to be seen at Ajanta (Plate XXVII *b*). The delicacy and crispness of these carvings can be best appreciated with the help of a magnifying glass, for the naked eye may fail to perceive the subtle intricacies of their designs. Besides the lotus motif which occupies the prominent place, there are creeper designs of a charming pattern in which human and animal figures are most artistically arranged (Plate XXVIII *a*). The animals are generally mythical in form, and the human figures are dwarfs (*gaṇas*) whose quaint poses evoke smiles. According to the inscriptions carved on some of these posts the sculptures appear to belong to the first or the second century A.D.

A large number of posts have *jātaka* stories carved on them, the sculptures being arranged in circular panels or in rectangular or other shaped compartments, such as could be fitted in on the facets of the posts. The carving of these subjects in regard to drawing and modelling, and the general arrangement of the figures, resembles so closely the technique of Ajanta paintings that the arts of these places seem to be closely allied. It was apparently on account of this resemblance that Fergusson regarded the majority of the sculptures of Amarāvati as belonging to the third or the fourth century A.D.

<sup>1</sup> G. Yazdani, *Ajanta*, pt. iii (text), pp. 22-23.

<sup>2</sup> Fergusson and Burgess, *Cave Temples of India*, Plate vii *a*. At Nāsik it is carved in a slightly modified form on the outer wall of cave III, above the pillars. See also Burgess, *Report on Buddhist Cave Temples and their Inscriptions*, 1876-79, pp. 23-24 and Plate viii (9).

This view is confirmed by Vincent Smith<sup>1</sup> and also in a general way by Codrington, who writes, 'The sculptures of Amarāvati as a whole are nearer to those of the Gupta age than to Sāñchī and Bharhut'.<sup>2</sup> The deciphering of contemporary inscriptions and a close study of the technical features of the sculptures in recent times, however, have now made it possible to fix their date with some certainty.

In Plate III *a*, which is from the fragment of a post, the subject represented is apparently the scene from the *Campeya jātaka* in which the Bodhisattva, who was born as the Serpent King, came out of the osier basket in which a Brāhmin had placed him, and surprised King Uggasena of Benares by his performance.<sup>3</sup> The *jātaka* is also reproduced in a painting at Ajanta, in the back corridor of cave I.<sup>4</sup> The astonishment of the rājā is shown by the characteristic gesture of his right hand. The faces of the ladies of the court also suggest the same feeling. The poses of the ladies in this subject show a striking resemblance to those of the wall-paintings of Ajanta, and a comparative study of the sculptures of Amarāvati and the paintings of the former place reveals the fact that the art of Ajanta is essentially Andhra, both in feeling and technique, so that the opinion expressed by previous writers who call it Gupta is not justifiable; on the contrary the development which took place at Amarāvati paved the way for the appearance of that phase of North Indian art which is associated with the Guptas.

In this subject the way in which the rānī has stretched out her right arm and placed her hand on the seat shows identically the same gesture as is to be noticed in a wall-painting in cave I,<sup>5</sup> which was executed three centuries later (fifth century), the tradition of Andhra art continuing during the intervening period. The features of the Brāhmin and his special style of kneeling may also be noticed in several subjects at Ajanta, and these similarities might lead one to assign a date for this sculpture not far removed from the paintings of Ajanta; but the heavy anklets worn by the ladies, the head-gear of the rājā, and the striped design of the foot-rests of the rājā and the rānī all suggest an early date, and the sculpture could not indeed have been executed at a later period than the second century A.D.<sup>6</sup>

Another typical subject (Plate XXVIII *b*) is a group representing a horse with a prince attended by two ladies. There is also another figure who is holding the horse. He may be the groom. The prince may be Siddhārtha, or some other royal personage, engaged in conversation with the ladies. The topic is apparently a religious one, for the gesture made by the prince with his right hand is undoubtedly conventional. The pose of the prince as well

<sup>1</sup> Vincent Smith, *History of Fine Art*, p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> K. de B. Codrington, *Ancient India*, p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> Cowell, *Jātaka* (English transl.), iv, 281-90.

<sup>4</sup> G. Yazdani, *Ajanta*, pl. xxv.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., pl. xxvii.

<sup>6</sup> Ludwig Bachhofer, *Early Indian Sculpture*, ii, pl. 109, appears to be correct in assigning this sculpture to the first half of the second century A.D.

as that of the ladies is natural, showing both ease and grace, although the legs of the ladies may appear to be unduly slender. Heavy anklets were in fashion during the early centuries of the Christian era and even during the centuries immediately preceding these, and the use of such ornaments would have both lengthened and attenuated the shins as the necks of Burmese girls are lengthened and made slender by the use of heavy metal collars even today. The marble slab on which the subject is carved is much abraded, hence the beauty of the carving cannot be appreciated properly. At the foot of this subject is a band representing seven seated Buddhas in the *Abhaya* or Assurance attitude.<sup>1</sup> The figure of the Buddha in a religious form was evolved by the Mathura sculptors some time about the second century A.D. They had modelled it on certain representations of the Bodhisattva of the Gandhāra School, which apparently found their way to Mathura under the Kushān kings. But the final stereotyped form of his features generally accepted was evolved by the artists of Amarāvati, and it was from the latter place that through the teachings of the Mahāyāna doctrine the conventional figure of the Great Being was copied in all parts of India, wherever the Buddhist religion was in vogue.<sup>2</sup> At Amarāvati the figure of the Sublime One was being carved from about the second century A.D., and in these circumstances the main panel of the sculpture described above, because of its special features, cannot be the work of a later period.

The multiplication of *dramatis personae* resulting from the exuberance of the artist's imagination is another feature of the art of Amarāvati which is frequently to be met with in the sculptures there. For example, note the crowding of figures in the circular panel representing the Alms-box of the Buddha in the Heaven of the Thirty-three (Plate XXIX *a*). Each figure has an attractive expression and a gay, carefree pose, the majority dancing from sheer joy in life, and those at the top, which are female figures, have interlaced themselves into a sort of garland. The latter arrangement as a decorative motif was often copied in later sculpture at Ajanta and elsewhere.<sup>3</sup>

The artist's love of ornamentation can be best understood from the numerous representations of the *stūpa* itself (Plate XXIX *b*), or from the many designs of the coping-stones of the railing in which plump *ganas* (dwarfs) and grown-up youths (*yakshas*) are carrying the heavy garland (Plate XXX *a-b*). In the former subject no inch of space is left without carving, and myth and nature and religion and art are interwoven in an intricate pattern. The figures are, however, mobile, and each plays its role in a significant manner in the general scheme.

The other subject representing a garland has a vast amount of decorative

<sup>1</sup> In this attitude the right hand is raised with the elbow bent and the palm exposed, and the left hand placed in the lap.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ludwig Bachhofer has discussed this subject in a very able manner, and students may read his dissertation in vol. i (pp. 110-14) of his book, *Early Indian Sculpture*.

<sup>3</sup> G. Yazdani, *Ajanta*, pt. iv, pl. lxxviii *b*.

work; the garland itself, which is in the form of a roll, has an embroidered or chased surface, the designs being of the floral kind which is to be noticed on the scarfs of chiefs in the early sculpture of the Deccan.<sup>1</sup> The artist has further decorated the garland with small panels, both circular and square in design, filled with alto-relievo sculptures. Between the loops are carved religious subjects representing the adoration of the Great Being by votaries, who are generally in pairs. The Master in these panels is not represented in human form, but his presence has been indicated by such symbols as the sacred tree or the *stūpa*. The workmanship is so neat that the entire pattern looks like the goldsmith's or the ivory-carver's work. It may also be borne in mind that both the goldsmith's and the ivory-carver's crafts were highly developed at that time, and the adepts in these crafts may also have practised stone-carving with equal success.

In comparing the sculpture of the western zone of the Deccan, namely that of Beḍṣā, Kōndāṇe, and Kārle, with that of Amarāvātī, one notices a marked progress, both in the intellectual and the technical qualities of the art. The sculpture of Amarāvātī is more eloquent in telling the story and more significant in expressing the inner feelings than its earlier prototype of the western zone. The movement suggested in the sculpture exhibits softer grace and a more subtle rhythm, while the human bodies show a greater charm of suppleness. The crowding of figures and attenuation of limbs are obvious defects of the sculpture of Amarāvātī, apparently due to the rich imagination and unrestrained fancy of the artist, but these blemishes were in course of time gradually removed from Indian sculpture, as will be noticed below in the study of the specimens of later periods, fifth to twelfth centuries A.D.

In passing from Amarāvātī to Ajanta and Ellora, a remarkable change both in outlook and feeling may be perceived, due evidently to the change of climate and geographical environment. The hot, moist atmosphere of the deltas of the Godāvarī and the Kṛishṇā, though it seems to have encouraged a lush fertility of imagination, enervated the artist's general vitality and produced a morbidity of thought. At Ajanta and Ellora, amidst the rolling plateaux and the high cliffs, the vision was at once widened and the intellect gained strength. The colossal statues of the Buddha inside the shrines and the lofty façades of the various *chaitya*-caves convey a sublimity of spirit and grandeur of ideals which are not to be met with at Amarāvātī, however charming and beautiful the sculptures of the latter place may be.

To illustrate the observations made above it will be appropriate to describe a few typical sculptures of Ajanta. Taking those of colossal size first, the Buddha in the shrine of cave I may be studied here (Plate XXX). The Great Being is represented in the teaching attitude, the *dharmacakra mudrā*. He is seated on a throne with the legs crossed and the soles of the feet

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Plate XXIII, in which the decorative work of the head-gear of a chief represented in a sculpture at Kōndāṇe is shown.

exposed. He is clad in a robe of transparent material, but the lower margin of the garment is indicated by a line a little above the ankle. The hair is curled in the conventional style and at the top of the head is a knob, the *nishīṣha*. Behind the head is a painted disk representing the halo, and two fat cherubs are bringing offerings of flowers from heaven. Behind the throne on either side of the Buddha is a princely attendant wearing a high crown. On the front of the throne the Wheel of Law is carved in the middle and there are also figures of stags, one on each side of the Wheel. The figures of some votaries may also be noticed behind the stags. The votaries are shown in different poses, some are squatting, some kneeling, and some sitting with their legs doubled, one touching the ground and another raised up. The subject carved on the throne evidently represents the sermon of the Buddha in the deer-park at Sārṇāth.

The figure of the Buddha is almost three times the size of an ordinary human being,<sup>1</sup> and although the body is carved in a conventional style the expression of the face is marvellous, showing internal calm and sublimity of feeling. The spiritual effect of the image is considerably enhanced by the golden light of the lamps, which originally would have been kept lighted day and night. The light of the lamps also shows a smile on the lips of the Great Being indicating his benign nature.

The door of the shrine may appear to be over-elaborately carved, but the workmanship is exquisite and the entire design gives a superb setting to the splendour of the religious subject carved inside the shrine.

Another colossal sculpture of Ajanta worthy of mention in this brief survey is the death scene of the Buddha carved in cave XXVI. He is represented as lying on a couch with his eyes closed and his head resting on a pillow. The right hand of the Master is under his cheek, and the fingers, notwithstanding the gigantic size of the figure—23 ft. 4 in. in length—have been carved with a most realistic effect, which is also to be noticed in the creases of the sleeve of the robe and those of the pillow. The Master's face shows calm and peace as if he is fast asleep.<sup>2</sup> The design of the feet of the couch has not changed much during the fourteen or fifteen hundred years which have elapsed since the subject was carved, and bedsteads with feet of this shape may still be seen in the towns of India. Another interesting piece of furniture is the stand for the water-flagon, which has three legs. By the side of the bed there are about twenty figures of monks and nuns mourning

<sup>1</sup> The following measurements may be of interest to students:

Height of the throne above the floor: 3 ft.

Height of the Buddha (seated), above the throne: 10 ft. 3 in.

Breadth of the image, chest and arms, front: 6 ft. 8 in.

Breadth of the image, from knee to knee, above the throne: 8 ft. 10 in.

<sup>2</sup> Hsüan Tsang, writing about A.D. 640, has observed regarding a similar sculpture at Kuśinara: 'In a great chapel is the representation of the *nirvāṇa* of the Tathagātha. His face is turned to the north, and has the appearance of one slumbering.'

the loss of the Master, their faces bearing distinct expressions of grief. Above the bed, higher on the rock-wall, are representations of Indra, and other gods of the heaven of the Thirty-three, and also of cherubs and heavenly musicians who are shown as if descending from the sky to welcome the Great Being on his return to heaven. There is a feeling of joy in the latter part of the scene in contrast to that of the grief shown by the figures near the bedstead. The general effect of the sculpture is, however, more of 'pathos' than of 'ethos', and it is the former aspect of the sculpture which appeals most to the eye and to the mind (Plate XXXI).

Among the sculptures of Ajanta there is a large number of representations of *Nāga* kings, but two of them are of outstanding merit from an artistic point of view. In a panel carved at the extreme end of the left wall of cave XIX is a subject representing a *Nāga* king and *Nāginī* seated on a throne (Plate XXXII).<sup>1</sup> Another *Nāginī* is shown as an attendant, standing by the side of the throne with a fly-whisk in her right hand. The stone being soft and porous, the sculpture has deteriorated considerably, but the pose of the two *Nāginīs* and the expression on the faces of all three figures betoken such internal calm that the subject is ranked for its spiritual effect amongst the best sculptures of Buddhist art.<sup>2</sup>

The other subject (Plate XXXIII) represents two *Nāga* kings carved as *dvārapālas*, one on each side of the door of cave XXIII.<sup>3</sup> The figures are not very large, but it is the modelling of their heads which exhibits the consummate skill of the artist. The features are refined and the expression of the face suggests both dignity and internal peace. The spiritual aspect of Buddhist sculpture may also be noticed in the figures of the Master carved on the rock-wall, on either side of the doorway of cave XIX (Plate XXXIV). But the most attractive feature of this cave is its decorative work, which shows an infinite variety of design, embracing mythical subjects, geometrical patterns, floral devices, and figures of birds and animals, the latter through the fancy of the sculptor having been carved into quaint shapes and bedecked with unusual ornaments, particularly the representations of the *makaras* and the *geese*. The rich imagination and perfect skill of the sculptor have caused the façade of this cave (XIX) to be considered one of the most magnificent examples of Buddhist art.

The figures of animals carved at Ajanta show a close study of their habits as well as complete ability to represent them with realistic effect, whenever the artist's fancy was not prepossessed by religious convention or mythical lore. The elephant is shown in a variety of poses characteristic of the animal,

<sup>1</sup> E. B. Havell, *Ideals of Indian Art*, pl. xxiv; A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Viśvakarma*, pl. lxxii; Fergusson and Burgess, *Cave Temples of India*, pl. xxxix; Yazdani, *Ajanta*, pt. iv, pl. lxxvi b.

<sup>2</sup> It may be of interest to note that in the *Vākāṭaka* genealogy a king named Bhavanāga is mentioned as the maternal grandfather of Rudrasena I (c. A.D. 335-360). This Bhavanāga has been identified with the King Bhavanāga of the *Nāga* dynasty of Padmāvati in the Gwalior State.

<sup>3</sup> Yazdani, *Ajanta*, pt. iv, pl. lxxviii a.



but sculptures of other animals also are equally lifelike, proving the keen observation of the artist. For example, in the hall of cave I above the capital of a pillar is a panel representing four deer with a common head (Plate XXXV *a*). It may be considered to be a mere freak to combine four bodies with one common head, but what is really admirable is that the pose of the animal in each representation is absolutely lifelike. In the lower two representations, the one on the left shows the animal sitting on the ground and looking in front with his head raised, as if he has scented danger; that on the right also shows the alertness of the animal, because he has curved his neck and is looking backward in the direction from which he fears the coming of the enemy. In the upper two representations, that on the left again shows the animal in a state of alarm; he has lowered his neck and stretched out his muzzle in front, and is looking sharply as if to watch the approach of his enemy and to determine in which direction to run away. The fourth figure, on the right, shows the deer in a characteristic attitude; he has turned his neck and head backwards in order to scratch his muzzle with the hoof of his foot. The bodies of the deer in all four figures have been carved in a realistic style with due regard to the three dimensions.

In passing from Ajanta to Ellora, one may notice a striking change in the religious aspect of the sculpture; although at the latter place all the three great religions of early India, the Buddhist, the Brāhmanic, and the Jaina, are represented, yet the Brāhmanic faith predominates over the other two. The early Buddhist caves of Ellora do not possess any sculpture of outstanding merit. Viśvakarma, the Do Thāl, and the Tīn Thāl, which were hewn in the seventh to eighth centuries A.D., of course contain representations of the Buddha and other deities of that religion, quite impressive in regard to their size, religious expression, and decorative features. But somehow they lack that spiritual dignity and artistic grace which is to be noted at Ajanta and other early centres of Buddhist art. The Brāhmanic sculpture of Ellora on the other hand has tremendous force and boundless energy, features showing the gods to be superhuman rather than human beings, which characteristic is also emphasized by the multiplication of their heads and arms. Again, since in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. Śaivism was the popular religion in the Deccan, the teaching of this faith, which regards God as a 'Destroyer', led the imagination of the artist to associate with the god the most horrid aspects of life which could be conceived. To elucidate this view further it will be best to describe in some detail some of the typical sculptures of Ellora. We begin with the Daśāvatāra, which was originally a Buddhist shrine and was later converted into a Brāhmanic temple and adorned with both Śaivite and Vaiṣṇavite bas-reliefs. In the upper hall of this temple, the first sculpture on the north side, near the door, represents the Bhairava. It is carved with great boldness and power, and the figure, which is gigantic in size, lunges forward with threatening ferocity. The god holds up his elephant

hide, with the necklace of skulls (*mūṇḍamālā*) falling below his loins; round him a cobra is knotted; his open mouth shows his large teeth, while with his *triśūla* he has transfixed one victim who, writhing on its prongs, seems to supplicate pity from the pitiless. He holds another by the heels with one of his left hands, raising the *ḍamru* as if to rattle it in joy while he catches the blood with which to quench his demoniac thirst. To add to the elements of horror Kālī, gaunt and grim, stretches her skeleton length below, with huge mouth, bushy hair, and sunken eyeballs, having a crooked knife in her right hand, and stretching out the other with a bowl, as if eager to share in the gore of the victim. Behind her head is an owl or vampire, a fit witness of the scene. On the right, in front of the skeleton, is Pārvatī; and higher up, near the foot of the victim *Rātnasura*, is a face putting out its tongue. The group is a picture of the devilish; the very armlets of Bhairava are ogre faces. The subject was a favourite one, for it is carved in several cave-temples at Ellora, the ghastly aspect of the scene being accentuated by varying detail. For example, the ugly teeth and protruded eyeballs of Bhairava in cave XXIX (Plate XXXV *b*) indicate an attitude of fury and devilish joy, which mood of the god has frightened his consort Pārvatī, who to calm her disconcerted mind and palpitating heart has placed her hand on her bosom. The sculpture in its force and dramatic effect is indeed marvellous, but at the same time its aggressive religious character cannot be overlooked. This aggressiveness is also to be noticed in the Vaishṇavite sculpture of the period seventh to eighth centuries A.D., although after a couple of centuries (tenth century onwards) through the teachings of the latter cult the statuary of the Deccan acquired much grace and beauty. In the Daśāvatāra, as well as in the Kailāsa, Vaishṇavite sculpture has the same relentless feeling and demoniac effect as the Śaivite statuary, and we find such subjects as Viṣṇu taking the giant stride and thrusting his rival Bali down to hell, or in his incarnation as Nṛsiṃha tearing out the entrails of his enemy, or as Varāha, the boar-incarnation, trampling on a snake demon and rescuing Pṛithvī, the Earth, from destruction. Both Coomaraswamy and Havell have reproduced the Daśāvatāra sculpture in which Viṣṇu as man-lion subdues Hiraṇya-Kaśipu, the king of Asuras, who according to the myth had obtained from Brahma a kind of immortality. Inflated with pride he attempted to occupy the position of Viṣṇu, and tormented his son Prahlāda who refused to worship his father in place of the god. The sculpture represents Viṣṇu, the man-lion, eight-armed, attacking his opponent Hiraṇya, who is inclined on one side as if admitting his defeat. The lower part of the sculpture is broken but the devilish growl of Nṛsiṃha and the helpless subdued mood of Hiraṇya are abundantly clear and make the subject a typical example of the Brāhmanic art of this period, the eighth century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> E. B. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, pl. xxiii; A. K. Coomaraswamy, *Viśvakarma*, pl. xliii; K. de B. Codrington, *Ancient India*, pl. 50 B.

But even amidst the Brāhmanic sculptures of Ellora of the eighth century A.D. one may notice here and there some subjects reminiscent of the soft grace, joyous expression, nimble movement, and elegant poses of the Buddhist statuary of the fifth century. Among such sculptures the pairs of flying figures carved on the upper walls of the Kailāsa, and the representation of a river-goddess at the upper end of the court, towards the left, in the Rāmeśvara, cave XXI, are of outstanding merit. The pairs of flying figures with their refined features, happy serenity, and appearance of movement have all the charm and grace of the Buddhist *apsarasas*, and the tradition of the sculptor's art in carving such figures seems to have continued even after the decline of the Buddhist faith, for figures in an equally effective style are to be noticed on the walls of the Vaishṇava temple at Aihole (Plate XXXVI *a*), which is almost contemporary with the Kailāsa at Ellora, and also on the exteriors of the shrines at Ālampur,<sup>1</sup> which are of a much later date, eleventh or twelfth century A.D. (Plate XIX *b*). The sculpture of the river-goddess in the Rāmeśvara, cave XXI, at Ellora, is almost classical in artistic effect both in regard to its technique and its higher intellectual qualities (Plate XXXVI *b*). The goddess stands on a lotus flower resting on the back of an alligator, whose muzzle and the lower part of whose body have been transformed into decorative motifs by the artist's love of ornamental vagaries. The pose of the figure is delightful, the outline curving in such a way as to suggest combined grace and vitality. The left hand of the divinity rests on the head of a dwarf whose face bears an expression of devout adoration, an emotion further indicated by the set of his folded hands. There are also cherubs, who are descending from heaven with presents to the goddess. One of these, however, has been partly effaced by the weathering of the rock. There is unfortunately a crack across the face of the goddess, but her graceful features and spiritual expression can still be admired. To the right proper of the goddess is a female attendant holding a fly-whisk. Through the weathering of the rock this figure also has suffered much damage and the facial features have been completely obliterated. The grace of the pose and the plastic beauty of the limbs, however, attract the eye.

The above sculpture, belonging apparently to the eighth century A.D., reminds one of the Buddhist sculptures in the *vihāra* cave (No. 7) at Aurangābād. In these there has been an attempt to express vitality by depicting large breasts and stout limbs (Plate XXXVII *a*). The face of the Rāmeśvara goddess has a fitting appearance of calm serenity, but the sculptor has indicated more human emotion in the carving of the rest of the figure, notably in the pose of the right foot. The dwarf in the Aurangābād subject has a comical expression, as though he is feeling the weight of the heavy arm of the goddess who, to maintain her balance, has placed her elbow on his head. The crossed legs, the crooked stick, and the exposed teeth of the dwarf add

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 25.

to the grotesque effect of the subject. This sculpture may belong to the end of the sixth or beginning of the seventh century A.D., when Buddhist art was gradually losing its intellectual qualities, but in this subject the bold conceptions of the artist are amply exhibited, as is also his flair for the quaint and bizarre.

To return to the Brāhmanic sculpture, it may be observed that, due to the doctrines of Śaktism and the influence of the Purāṇic literature connected with this teaching, the aggressive character of Śaivite sculpture gradually softened down with the passing of time after the eighth century A.D., and in the tenth century A.D. we see Śiva dancing, not as a fiercely aggressive figure but in sheer joy of living, and often accompanied by musicians and his gentle consort Pārvatī. Teaching based on the worship of the active producing principle, as inculcated by Śaktism, led the artist to introduce into religious sculpture a variety of subjects some of which may be considered to be obscene, such as the *maithuna* pairs; but for command of grace in moulding outlines and for charm of decorative features Indian sculpture of this class undoubtedly reached its high-water mark during the tenth to thirteenth centuries A.D.

But before describing Brāhmanic sculpture of the above style it will be correct chronologically to point out the salient features of the Jaina sculpture of the Deccan. The Jaina faith existed here from very early times, but flourished especially during the period of the ninth to eleventh centuries A.D., when important centres of the cult were established at Ellora, at Patancheru, nineteen miles to the north-west of the present city of Hyderabad, at Kulpāk, the Kollipaka of the inscriptions, forty-five miles north-east of Hyderabad, and at Kopbal in the Raichur District of the Hyderabad State. All these sites are ancient, and at Kopbal some inscriptions have been discovered which show that the latter town had acquired fame as a *tīrtha* of the Jaina religion in the ninth century A.D. Some scholars have found evidence for asserting that Kopbal (Kopana) was noted as a Jaina sanctuary in the seventh century A.D.<sup>1</sup> At Ellora the temples of this faith, being rock-hewn, are intact, except for a few which owing to the weathering of the rock have deteriorated somewhat. At other places, however, great havoc was wrought through the rivalry of contemporary faiths and there is epigraphic evidence to prove that some Jaina shrines were burnt and razed to the ground. Such acts of vandalism seem to have been perpetrated at Patancheru, Kulpāk, and Kopbal, where the Archaeological Department has dug out from the ground, and also collected from the surface, a large number of Jaina images.

As regards the general character of the Jaina sculpture of the Deccan it may be observed that it shows competent workmanship and also conveys to some extent a feeling of religious serenity; but it suffers by comparison with

<sup>1</sup> The Kannaḍa Inscriptions of Kopbal, *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, Monograph No. 12, p. 2, n. 1.

Buddhist statuary, or with Brāhmanic images, because it possesses neither the majestic dignity of the former, nor the vigour and zeal of the latter. The art seems to be schematic, representations being classed according to certain religious principles and showing no creative effort on the part of the artist. To illustrate this view two images may be described (Plates XXXVII b-XXXVIII a); one of them is now exhibited in Sālār Jung's palace at Sururnagar in the suburbs of Hyderabad, and the other is displayed in the Sculpture Gallery of the Hyderabad Museum. The former was found at Kōpbal and represents Pārśvanātha standing under a mystical canopy comprising seven cobra-hoods joined to the body of a single dragon whose coils are spread behind the god and whose tail touches the ground. Above this canopy there is another, probably of metal, divided into several tiers and finally crowned with a pointed finial.

On one side of the figure of the god, near his feet, is the representation of a *yakṣa* and on the corresponding side the figure of a *yakṣiṇī*, both being much smaller in size than the main figure.<sup>1</sup> There are miniature representations of the twenty-three Tīrthaṅkaras of the Jaina faith seated in small niches, which are arranged in a scroll adorning the margin of the slab on which the image of Pārśvanātha is carved. There is also a Kanarese inscription at the foot of the slab mentioning the name of the votary, Bopanna, at whose instance the image of the god was carved.<sup>2</sup>

The figure shows good modelling with regard to the treatment of the head and the limbs, while the face bears an expression of internal calm derived from moral austerity such as is inculcated by the Jaina religion. The sculpture is of hornblende of the same variety as that used for the pillars and friezes of the Deccan temples of the eighth to thirteenth centuries. It is jet black and beautifully polished.

The other sculpture, exhibited in the Hyderabad Museum, is also of hornblende, and the god is shown seated in the *dhyāna mudrā*, the attitude of contemplation. The modelling of this figure also shows technical skill of a high order. Although the god is carved in a meditative mood, his neck and head are held firmly upright and convey by this pose an impression of spiritual dignity. In Jaina sculpture the figures of gods do not generally possess any decorative features, but this artist's leaning towards ornamentation may be noticed in the treatment of the hair, which has been shown as if dressed with a fine brush. The small *chakras* carved on the soles of the feet also show the same tendency.

In purely decorative designs, such as floral and jewellery patterns, or conventional motifs based on mythical or real animal figures, or miniature scriptural subjects, the skill of the Jaina sculptor is in no way inferior to that of the Buddhist or the Brāhmanic artist. It perhaps even surpasses that

<sup>1</sup> Each of these two figures has a *nāga* hood above it in the form of a small canopy.

<sup>2</sup> For this inscription see Monograph 12, *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, p. 11.

of his rivals of the latter two faiths in richness of design and exuberance of complicated ornamental detail. But this lavishness of Jaina art is often out of proportion in relation to the general scheme of a subject as a whole, and thus betrays a lack of balanced judgement and refined taste.

In coming to the Brāhmanic sculpture of the tenth to thirteenth centuries we appear to have passed beyond the times of acute controversy, since the artist does not seem to have been possessed during this period by any such feelings of acrimony towards a rival faith as might arouse his passions and cause him to dwell on violent and aggressive themes. Nor does his impulse seem to be oppressed and fettered by any traditional devices and rules which might make his creation feeble or lifeless. His love of the beautiful is further developed, but beauty to him is not restricted within the narrow limits of symmetry of limbs or elegance of features. He notices it in the vigour and movement of the fullness of life, and his heart expands and his imagination is stirred by visions and experiences emanating from a wider outlook upon art and a broader conception of beauty.

To enable the student to grasp the full artistic import of the sculpture of the Deccan of this period—tenth to thirteenth centuries—seven typical subjects are described below, four of which are from the well-known temple near the Rāmappa Lake in the Warangal District, one from a Vaishṇavite temple at Peḍampet in the Karimnagar District, and two from the Pañchīśvara temple, near the embankment of the Pāngul tank at Nalgonda. As the number of temples adorned with sculpture of a high artistic quality is unlimited in the Deccan, it appears that carving as a folk-art must have made tremendous progress during this period. Almost every village, whether in the Marāṭha zone or in the Teliṅgāna or Karnatak areas, possesses a temple decorated with sculpture of exceptional beauty and elegance.

Of the four sculptures from the Rāmappa temple three represent dancing-girls. They are carved on blocks used architecturally as struts for the support of eaves (*chhajjas*). The faces of these dancers do not possess such refined features as might appeal to those who appreciate Greek ideals of art, nor do the figures exhibit any fine symmetry of limbs, but the suggestion of movement and pulsating life conveyed by the gestures of fingers and the poses of the bodies appeals to the artistic sense, more particularly because the sculptor has managed to give a wonderful impression of youth and rhythm. The outline of the body seems to move in curves, indicating in each pose, or dancing-step, an emotional grace and a mood of exultation seldom to be met with in Indian sculpture of the earlier periods. This temple, according to a contemporary record, was built in A.D. 1203; and what art is now trying to express in the West was perhaps expressed in India 800 years before (Plates XXXVIII *b*-XXXIX *a-b*).

The idea of the exuberance of youth combined with unfettered emotion is further illustrated in the next two sculptures (Plate XL *a-b*), one from

the Rāmappa temple and the other from the shrine at Peḍampet. The former represents the nude study of a woman (*nāgini*) intoxicated with the fervour of youth. Impetuous *joie-de-vivre* is conveyed in the treatment of the legs, which are gracefully extended at full length, or in that of the arms which are lifted lightly to bring into prominence the charm of a youthful bosom. There is a delightful swaying in the line of the body between the chest and the hips which enhances the emotional effect of the sculpture. The artist, to give further mythical significance to the sculpture, has placed a serpent in her hands and one or more round her neck, arms, and body, as if she had clasped them with ecstatic frenzy in her mood of exultant joy. The serpent held by her delicate fingers has a large hood to be seen to the left of her right hand.

The other sculpture, which is from Peḍampet, possesses some very striking characteristics, notably the extraordinary plumpness of the hips, which feature is further exaggerated by the sharp curve of the body line near the waist. The waist is thin, as is usual in Indian sculpture, but in this subject this characteristic has been accentuated by the over-development of bosom and abdomen. The arms have been thrown up and the hands gracefully joined above the head. But in carving the arms the artist has again exaggerated their girth in contrast to the elbows, which look comparatively thin but more shapely. This exaggeration of certain parts of the body, as if to suggest an exuberance of life, or swirl of emotion, combined with the bold sweep of the line of the body may perhaps be held to confirm the view of certain critics of modern Western art that the influence of Indian sculpture is unmistakable in the symbolic and impressionistic aspects of the latter.

The next two sculptures (Plate XL *a-b*), which are from the Pañchīśvara temple at Pāngul, represent Śiva and Gaṇeśa respectively; Śiva has a victim trampled under his feet, but the swing of his figure, the liveness of his many arms, and the sensitive appearance of his fingers and toes have given the entire subject an aspect of light-hearted enjoyment, and the idea of anger or ruthless revenge felt in the sculptures of Ellora of the late seventh or eighth century is not to be perceived here. The same carefree attitude is evident in the next sculpture, in which Gaṇeśa is shown riding on a rat. The bizarre nature of the scheme has issued in a most grotesque creation. The workmanship of both sculptures is neat, and the artist's love of ornamentation may be appreciated from a study of the minor details of the sculptures. Grace of poise, suppleness of limbs, sense of movement, and elegance of minute ornamentation are the salient features of the sculptures of this period—tenth to thirteenth centuries A.D. They also suggest an idea of well-being and felicity, not the solemn spiritual joy of the Buddhist, but a more human feeling resulting from overflowing vitality or from the emotions of sex attraction.

In concluding this review of the sculpture of the Deccan it may be ob-

served that the fine bronze figures which are to be seen everywhere in the temples of South India are rarely to be found in the Deccan, but this scarcity does not necessarily prove that the sculptor of the Deccan did not use bronze at all as a medium for the successful exhibition of his talent. In A.D. 1932 a small bronze image was accidentally discovered during excavations of the foundations of a house in Warangal. The image is only  $6\frac{1}{8}$  inches in height, but the modelling of the head and the expression of the face show both technical skill and intellectual qualities of a high order, and the figure seems to belong to the period ninth to tenth centuries A.D., for it has neither the harshness of the early Brāhmanic sculpture nor the soft grace of the later statuary of the same faith. The face shows an inner determination and calm based on an austere religious discipline. The expression has some resemblance to the calm of some of the Jaina images of Ellora, but this bronze statuette belongs to the Brāhmanic faith, and perhaps represents Lakshmī in the form of a lamp-bearer (Plate XLII *a*). The lamp is missing, but the manner in which the hands are stretched out shows that they originally held something.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The image is described in greater detail in the *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, June 1934, pp. 11-12, pl. xiii. See also the *Annual Report* of the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad, 1933-4, p. 13, pl. xi.



## IV

### PAINTING

It is difficult to state precisely when painting as an art began in the Deccan, but the specimens of wall painting which exist on the left wall of the *chaitya*-cave X at Ajanta show a fairly well-developed craftsmanship. This *chaitya*, according to two contemporary Brāhmī inscriptions, was cut in the rock about the end of the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup> The paintings on the left wall of cave IX, which is also a *chaitya*, are similar in style to those of cave X and may be at the most fifty to a hundred years later than their prototypes in the latter cave. They represent aboriginal people with long hair, which is tied with ribbons in the form of crests of serpents' hoods on the crowns of their heads. They have scanty clothing but elaborate jewellery, the latter comprising large ear-rings and metal necklaces of various designs. The features of the women and of some of the men resemble those of the Marāṭhas of the present day, with oval faces, short noses, fairly thick lips, and medium stature. These paintings apparently represent contemporary people, a hybrid race, i.e. a mixture of the aboriginal Dravidians (or the pre-Dravidians) and the Scythians, who seem to have entered the Deccan in the early centuries of the first millennium B.C., if not earlier. Men wear narrow loin-cloths to cover their bodies; women have a similar garment for the lower part of the body, but they also wear a brassière (*choli*) and have a scarf (*orhni*) to cover the head in the present Indian style.

The colours used in the paintings of caves IX and X are red ochre, yellow ochre, terre-verte, lamp black, and white of lime, which have been used pure or mixed to produce the desired effect in the scheme. For the lower lip and the corners of the eye the artist has used a kind of bright vermillion, apparently made from red ochre. The drawing is firm and accurate and shows due regard to the three dimensions. But there are no light or dark colour washes to accentuate any particular detail, or to show the body in the round, such as one notices in the wall-paintings of caves I and II, which belong to a later period, the fifth century A.D. The grouping shows a balanced judgement, and there is both life and movement in the figures drawn.

Let us describe the scene painted on the left wall of cave X: first there are some soldiers armed with spears, maces, bows and arrows, swords, and sickle-like scimitars. They are clad in short-sleeved shirts or jackets, and one of them has an elaborate head-gear which is in the form of a turban at

<sup>1</sup> Prof. Lüders is very definite in his opinion and he states that the painted inscription on the left wall belongs to the middle of the second century B.C., while the inscription carved on the façade is still earlier. *Ajanta*, iii, 1, and appendix, pp. 86-87.

the top with flaps for the protection of the ears, and also a band which passes below the chin, and is apparently meant to keep the helmet firmly fixed to the head. The soldiers belong to the bodyguard of a *rājā* who with a group of ladies is seen immediately in front of them. The *rājā* is shown in front of a tree which is bedecked with flags. The tree evidently represents the Bodhi-tree under which the Buddha received his 'enlightenment'. In early Buddhist sculpture and painting the Buddha is not represented in human form, for according to the Hīnayāna doctrine it was considered sacrilege so to present him. The *rājā* has come to fulfil some vow connected with the boy who is standing close to the tree. He is reciting a prayer and all the ladies of the party are taking part in the ritual. The head of one lady is decorated with three peacock's feathers (Plate XLII *b*).

On the other side of the tree, towards the right, is a large party of musicians and dancers, comprising fifteen artistes, all of whom are female. Women are reported to have joined the Buddhist *saṅghārāmas* as nuns during Gautama's lifetime, or shortly afterwards; but the presence of a well-developed orchestra, such as is shown in this painting, in the second century B.C., indicates that the organization of female dancers and musicians attached to religious shrines existed in the Deccan earlier than the advent of the Buddhist faith. Two of the party in this painting are blowing trumpets and the rest are clapping or dancing. Clapping is still used in India and in other Oriental countries to mark time, or to produce the high pitch effect in music. Among the dancers the one nearest the sacred tree has raised and curved her arm in a peculiar style as if to give the body a whirl like the eddying motion of water, or the writhing of a serpent. The poses and steps of the other two dancers are typically Indian and may be noticed in the dancing of the present day (Plate XLIII *a*).

The drawing of this subject shows a well-developed art, both in conception and execution, and it must have taken many centuries to reach that stage. There is a close resemblance in the representation of the human figures, in regard to their dress, ornaments, and ethnical features, between this painting and the sculptures at Kondāṇe and Kārle, which are contemporary with it and belong to the second century B.C., or about that date.<sup>1</sup>

On the right wall of cave X is painted the *Shaḍ-Danta Jātaka*, or the story of the Six-Tusked Elephant, with an inscription which palaeographically cannot be earlier than the third century A.D. If the inscription is connected with the painting, it appears that the latter is some four centuries later than its prototype on the right wall of this cave, which has already been described. The people represented in this painting are also non-Āryans, like those of the former, but the artist's delight in the scenic beauty, or his close study of animal life, or his skill in expressing feelings of pathos with a religious

<sup>1</sup> The dancing figures carved at Kārle and Kondāṇe have already been described in the section on sculpture, *supra*, pp. 30-31.

effect, or his love of ornamentation in minor detail, are qualities which show that the art of painting had made much progress, both intellectually and technically, during the period of 400 years which intervened between the paintings of the left and the right walls.

The artist has painted all the incidents mentioned in the *Shaḍ-Danta Jātaka*, but he has changed their order. He begins with the wild life of elephants in an impenetrable forest with marshy soil infested by crocodiles and pythons (Plate XLIII *b*), and terminates with palace scenes, crowded with human figures and a royal procession to a place of worship comprising a *stūpa* and a *vihāra* (Plate XLIV). In the middle he has delineated the bath of the royal elephant in the lotus-lake, and his favourite resort under a colossal banyan tree (Plate XLV). This arrangement has a certain significance from the point of view of the artist, who for an impressive demonstration of his skill has kept the scenes relating to animal life and to the beauty of natural scenery almost separate from those depicting human feelings, wherein the gloom of sorrow and suffering is illumined by the light of faith and devotion.

Among the scenes of animal life in a forest the artist has painted with great effect a fight between an alligator and an elephant, the elephant having thrown his rival on its back and placed one of his forelegs on its belly, and being in the act of exerting further pressure with his trunk in order to crush the alligator. Close by a huge python has caught one of the legs of an elephant, who seems to be in great agony and has raised his trunk as if to shriek and call to his companions of the herd for help. A delightful scene is the bath of a herd of elephants in a lotus-lake, where they are shown raising and curving their trunks in a variety of characteristic styles as they revel in the comforting luxury of the water.

For dramatic effect the most impressive is the court-scene wherein the *rānī* faints at the sight of the tusks, for the *Shaḍ-Danta* elephant in a previous incarnation had been her beloved husband and in a fit of revenge she had sent hunters to bring the tusks of the elephant, since according to her fancy he was more devoted to his other wife than to herself. The *rājā* of Benares, who is her husband in the present incarnation, is seated next to her, and is supporting her by placing one of his hands behind her back and holding her right shoulder with the other. A maid in attendance is fanning her, another has brought water to pour on her head, or to sprinkle on her face, a third nearest to the *rānī* is offering her a drink, and a fourth at the right side of the scene has placed her hand on her mouth in characteristic Indian style to subdue her feelings of grief. The maid holding the umbrella is looking towards the tusks, which have struck the entire court with consternation. A woman who is squatting on the floor is massaging the soles of the *rānī*'s feet in order to revive her. Apart from the general effect of pathos which pervades the entire scene, the grouping of the figures, the graceful poses, the beautiful coiffures

and ornaments of the ladies, and the scanty but artistic dress of the various persons in the picture all illustrate the lively imagination and refined taste of the painter, as well as his highly developed technical skill and his power of portraying a subject in any manner he may desire according to the dictates of his fancy.

The subject on the right wall of cave X marks an important stage in the history of the painting of the Deccan, because this form of the art, as regards both the representation of racial types in human figures, and the technique and material of the painting itself, is essentially indigenous and is not dominated by any alien influences, even from as near as Northern India. About the close of the third century A.D. the Andhras, the then rulers of the country, were overthrown and succeeded by the Vākātakas, who hailed from the territory north of the Deccan and had matrimonial relations with the Guptas. During their administration of some two hundred years Buddhism flourished in the Deccan, but in dogma as well as ritual it was much influenced by the co-existing Brāhmanic faith throughout this period.

The prevalence of the Mahāyāna doctrine in the Deccan from the beginning of the fourth century A.D. (it was evolved nearly a century earlier in North India) was largely due to this impact of the religious beliefs and culture of the north on those obtaining to the south of the Narmadā up to the end of the third century A.D. As a result of this blending of cultures and religious ideals the art of painting made rapid progress intellectually, although its technique remained indigenous, for there was apparently no school of painting in Āryan India from whose practice it could be benefited.

On the wall and pillars of cave X at Ajanta there are some paintings which on the ground of palaeographic evidence or technical development may be assigned to the fourth century A.D., such as the Śyama Jātaka delineated to the left of the Shad-Danta Jātaka on the right wall, or some representations of the Buddha on the pillars of the side aisles. But to be absolutely sure of this date it would be best to compare it with some of the typical paintings of caves I, II, XVI, and XVII, which all belong to the fifth century A.D., because there are both painted and rock-cut inscriptions in these caves in which occur the names of some Vākātika kings who ruled during the last quarter of the fifth century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the time-sequence of these four caves it may be observed that in the matter of technique caves I and XVI appear to be almost contemporary, cave XVII immediately following them, and cave II coming last in the group. In cave I the stories of the 'renunciation' of the Buddha predominate, in cave XVI the stories of his birth and childhood and some

<sup>1</sup> 'Vākātika Inscription in Cave XVI at Ajanta,' *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*, No. 14, pp. 2-10; *J.B.B.R.A.S.*, vii (1862), 56 ff.; 'Cave Temples of Western India,' *A.S.I.*, 1882, pp. 69 ff., and the *Archaeological Survey of Western India*, iv (1883), 124 ff.

legends connected with the monastic life are delineated, whilst cave XVII contains mainly the stories of the Buddha's previous incarnations in different forms, as a generous prince or a benevolent animal—elephant, monkey, deer, goose, fish, or serpent. Cave II contains some stories of the Buddha as Prince Siddhārtha, and also some tales of his previous incarnations as the sagacious Brāhman, Vidhurapaṇḍita, or the hermit Kṣāntivādī.

The ideals of art represented in the paintings of the above-mentioned four caves are characterized by a divine majesty and serenity on the one hand, and by human emotion and feelings of affection on the other. In the subject 'Mother and Child before the Buddha' one receives an impression of the sublimity of the Great Being from his colossal size as well as from his calm and dignified expression, but the motive which has brought him to beg at his own door is intensely human, and this human feeling, in a more lively manner, is conveyed to us by the love-light in the eyes of Yaśodharā, his wife, and by the astonished looks of Rāhula, his son (Plate XLVI). The figure of the Buddha must originally have measured some 10 ft., while that of his wife is somewhere near 5 ft., the difference in size denoting that the former is superhuman, whilst the latter is but a mere human being. There is not a large variety of colours in the painting, but the few which have been used show refined taste. The Buddha is dressed in an orange robe, his own complexion being brown with a golden effect. The hair, which is shown curled conventionally, is jet black. The background is of a dark colour, originally being dark green, or dark red, but its darkness makes a happy contrast with the orange colour of the robe and the golden brown of the face. The figure, owing to the dark background, appears almost in relief. This dullness of the background, however, has been relieved by flowers of bright colours which are being showered from heaven over the head of the Master. A cherub supports a canopy over his head. The Buddha himself holds a begging-bowl in his right hand, which he has stretched out towards Yaśodharā. She has pushed the child lovingly in front of her to be blessed by the Great Being, and herself seems to be overpowered by feelings of reverence as she contemplates the exalted position of her beloved husband. The painting admirably represents spiritual greatness combined with human emotion such as is expressed in the following words of the legend: 'O Siddhārtha, that night Rāhula was born, you renounced the kingdom and went silently away. Now you have a more glorious kingdom instead.'

In the portraits of the Mother and Child there is actually very little colour, but the line work is so perfect and the ornaments are so tastefully adjusted that the result is a masterly specimen of the delineation of feminine grace imbued with tender feelings of love.

In cave I, the subject painted in the back corridor to the left of the antechamber again represents the Buddha as Prince Siddhārtha,<sup>1</sup> but in this case

<sup>1</sup> He is also identified with the Bodhisattva Padmapāṇī, because in Buddhist temples, on either

the scheme is more subtle and varied than in the painting of cave XVII described above, both in regard to its intellectual and to its artistic qualities (Plate XLVII). The prince is shown here on the eve of his 'renunciation'; he is determined but still in the midst of his royal attendants and is also accompanied by his wife, whose portrait here suggests the grace of a mother rather than that of a young girl-wife.

The figure of Prince Siddhārtha does not possess the perfect anatomical symmetry of a Greek Apollo, yet it has a physical beauty all its own, shown in the broad chest, the well-developed shoulders and arms, and the handsomely set neck and head. The chief attraction of the figure is, however, its religious expression, which has made it perhaps unique among specimens of contemporary art in India and abroad. The half-closed meditative eyes, with the eye-brows slightly stretched upwards in the broad forehead, and the lips closed as if in a divine silence, indicate a majestic indifference to the charms of worldly life on the one hand and a spiritual tranquillity on the other. The high lights on the forehead, nose, and chin heighten the effect of serenity. The dress of the prince is scanty, but the garment covering the lower part of his body is of a rich material, probably of silk, with check patterns worked out in different colours. His princely dignity is asserted by the rich crown set with jewels, the necklet of pearls, the large ear-rings, the wristlets and arm-bands, and above all by a rope of pearls in which the strings have been tastefully intertwined and which is hung round the shoulders and the waist. The long black hair, which is spread in locks behind the shoulders, by the contrast of colour has made the head stand out in relief; and to produce a similar effect the artist has placed dark green dots, close to one another, behind the golden crown, so that a sort of perspective is obtained. Further, to delineate the body in the round the painter has darkened the outline of the drawing, and has also used washes of a deeper colour along the outline in contrast to the colour used for the main part of the body.

The features of the prince are Āryan, refined and elegant, but the lady who stands close to him and is probably his wife Yaśodharā has a swarthy complexion. The idea of the painter in making this difference in the complexions of Siddhārtha and Yaśodharā was apparently that Buddhism in its teaching made no distinction of colour and that the fair complexion was therefore as attractive as the dark one. Variety of racial types is further indicated in the figures of the guard and the maid in attendance, the former apparently being an Abyssinian and the latter a Persian. The maid seems to be a lady of distinction, for she is clad in a long, full-sleeved coat of blue silk or velvet, and has a crown on her head. The guard is also dressed in a long coat with tight sleeves, and has an ornamental band round his head, above which his

side of the entrance to the shrine, the figures of the Bodhisattvas Padmapāṇī and Vajrapāṇī are generally carved or painted. The Bodhisattva in this cave holds a lotus-flower (*padma*) in his right hand.

curly hair is visible. The nose and lips of the guard are thick. Yaśodharā herself is shown wearing a tight bodice (*choli*) of a transparent, gossamer-like material, and it may be interesting to note that while the royal personages, male and female, are so scantily dressed with regard to the upper parts of their bodies, the guards or maids in attendance are generally fully clothed. This economy in the draping of the royal personages is amply compensated by the profusion of the jewellery worn by them, which, however, shows good taste in regard to design, whilst the wealth of the wearers is suggested by the size and quality of the gems.

The figure of the prince bears marks of both worldly state and religious distinction, and his expression of calm tranquillity is that of one unaffected by joy or sorrow; but the faces of Yaśodharā and of the Persian maid and the Abyssinian guard clearly reflect their depression, Yaśodharā being grieved by the idea of approaching separation from her beloved husband, and the maid and the guard at the thought of losing their royal master through his renouncement of the world. The artist has, however, planned to mitigate the general impression of sadness by showing the denizens of forest and hills in a happy mood, resulting from their delight that the prince has taken the right step in relinquishing secular honours and riches and has not been deceived by their attractions. Monkeys are frolicking about on the ledges of conventional hills; a pair of peafowls, which are to be seen a little higher, have raised their heads towards the sky and their open beaks suggest that they are crying out in joy; even a tiger has come out of his den to join the group of exultant beasts and birds. *Kinnaras*, whose bodies are half human being and half bird, and who are mythologically the musicians of heaven, are playing on harps and other musical instruments to express their rejoicing. A happy human pair have chosen a secluded corner for sipping wine and for amorous dalliance. The religious theme of the subject has combined all these different elements so judiciously that each has a significance in the entire scheme and none appears to be superfluous. The artist has also shown a highly refined taste in the choice of colours: the red of the conventional hills contrasts well with the green of the various trees, plants, and bushes growing on them, and the splashes of blue and the gleam of pearls brighten the darker tints of the human faces and forms. The painting in both its artistic and religious significance has perhaps the same importance in the history of art as the paintings of Michelangelo on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, or the Last Supper of Leonardo da Vinci at Milan, although the latter frescoes were executed some 900 years after their prototype at Ajanta.

The artists of Ajanta have painted woman in a variety of delightful poses, but her moral dignity is always maintained. She appears as a princess, a maidservant, a peasant, a nun, or even a dancing-girl, but in none of these roles has the painter made her mean or pitiful; on the contrary he has always

presented her as worthy of being admired and adored. As Indian ladies are in the habit of sitting on the ground, some of the poses may appear somewhat unusual to a European connoisseur who is not familiar with ways of life in India. For example, the pose of the lady delineated on the left wall of the front corridor in cave I may strike a European as rather uncomfortable, the legs being bent in an extraordinary manner (Plate XLVIII *a*).<sup>1</sup> The balance exhibited in the drawing of the head and the other parts of the body is, however, so perfect that it displays not only the suppleness of her limbs but also a happy grace of mind and manner, particularly evident in the dignity of the way in which she regards the male figure (the Bodhisattva) seated by her.

Another delightful representation of woman in cave I is the subject, styled the Black Princess, painted in the back corridor, to the right of the ante-chamber (Plate XLVIII *b*).<sup>2</sup> The contour of the body is here most graceful and the features are highly refined, whilst the delineation of the eyes is extremely realistic, the hazel-brown of the irises and the faint touches of red in the corners giving a most life-like effect. The treatment of the hair at the temples and the nape of the neck shows not only rich imagination but also marvellous brushwork. The jewellery further exhibits exquisite taste, the pearl tiara with a fine sapphire ornament in the middle being especially pleasing. For grace of poise, elegance of decorative features, and restful expression there are few paintings in the contemporary art of the world which can be regarded as on an equal footing with this masterpiece of the art of Ajanta in the fifth century A.D.

Artists during this period not only possessed consummate skill in delineating both human and animal figures in a vivid style, but their decorative genius in adorning ceilings, pedestals of columns, and door- and window-frames created patterns and motifs of kaleidoscopic variety, each exhibiting extraordinary powers of conception and a highly developed technique. The panel in the ceiling of cave I (Plate XLIX *a*) representing two freakish animals sporting with one another,<sup>3</sup> or the parrot in the ceiling of the same cave perched on a lotus-stalk, or the *arhat* shown flying in the ceiling of cave II (Plate XLIX *b*), or the panel of fabulous animals in the hall of cave XVII (Plate L *a*), or the delightful pairs of merry-makers on the door-frame of the latter cave (Plate L *b*), as well as hundreds of other subjects similar to these, show the versatility of the artist's mind, his love of beauty, and his joyous outlook upon life.

A sensitive feeling for whimsical motifs is a distinguishing feature of the art of Ajanta in the fifth century A.D., and this tendency has often given a new complexion to otherwise more sombre religious stories. For instance, in the Viśvantara Jātaka, painted on the left wall of cave XVII, the ugly features of the avaricious Brāhman, Jūjaka, his goat-like beard, broken teeth, bald head, and cringing attitude at once evoke a smile (Plate LI *a*)

<sup>1</sup> *Ajanta*, i, pl. x c.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. xxxiii.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pl. xxxix b.



and make one forget the inner cruel nature of this Brāhman as shown in the story by his inhuman treatment of the young children of Viśvantara, who had given them to him as an act of charity.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, the grotesque features of the monsters of Māra's army, who Satan-like wanted to turn the Buddha aside from the attainment of enlightenment, change the serious religious effect of the scene and add to it an incongruously comic element. For example, who will not be diverted by the red monster with a large head and small body, who is glaring fiercely and opening his mouth with his little fingers as if to frighten the Buddha? A white owl is perched on the head of this monster: in India the owl is considered to be the harbinger of ill fortune.

Some critics have complained of the lack of perspective in the paintings of Ajanta. This may be true to a certain extent of the earlier frescoes, but in the fifth century A.D. the painter understood how to convey the idea of depth or distance in his work. In the *Abhisheka* scene, painted in the back corridor of cave I, the drawing of the pillared hall shows that the artist was by then familiar with perspective since he has admirably conveyed the idea of distance in the drawing of the pillars. Similarly, on the right wall of cave XVI, in the birth-scene of the Buddha, wherein Māyā is shown lying on a couch in a circular pavilion, the drawing of the pavilion is perfect (Plate LI *b*), and it is apparent that one who did not possess a sense of perspective could not have drawn a circular object so accurately. But it is not for such petty distinctions that the art of Ajanta of the fifth century A.D. is to be admired. The skill of the painter should on the other hand be appreciated in the charming sweeps of the brush line, comprising subtle curves and undulations; in the lovely contrasts of colours, whether bright or dark, all suggesting a refined taste; in the large variety of poses showing the keen observation of the artist and his delight in the manifold phases of life; in the vivid expressions of the human figures, and in the exquisite decorative work, such as is to be seen in the lovely coiffures of the ladies, or the beautiful designs of their jewellery and dress; or in the fascinating representations of flowers, birds, and animals, real or mythological. The grouping of figures may appear bewildering to one unacquainted with Indian life, but each figure or design has its own significance in the telling of the story, and if any one of them were omitted the story would lose its zest.

In the sixth century A.D. the Vākātakas were succeeded by the Chālukyas as rulers of the Deccan. The Chālukyas professed the Brāhmanic faith, but in the beginning they were not only tolerant to the votaries of the Buddhist religion but emulated them in the styles of their rock-hewn architecture and painting. The temples carved by them in the living rock at their capital Vātāpi, modern Bādāmi, exist to this day, and although they contain Śaivite and Vaishṇavite sculpture, yet their architectural style is in imitation of that of a Buddhist *vihāra*, and one of these cave-temples, cave No. 3, bears traces

<sup>1</sup> For the full story see *Jātaka* (English Translation), vi. 246-305, Cambridge edition.

of painting which are analogous in style to those of Ajanta (Plate LII a). But a strict observer cannot help remarking that the paintings of Bādāmi, though not much later in date than those of caves I and XVII of Ajanta, show a distinct falling off in the standard; the elegance of the features, the vividness of expression, and the freshness of the colours have all appreciably deteriorated, and artistic fancy and creative effort are replaced by insipid conventionality and soulless imitation. The sixth-century paintings of Ajanta itself, as shown on the pillars, ceilings, and friezes of caves IX and X, comprise floral designs of a stereotyped pattern, or the representations of the Buddha in the teaching attitude, seated on a throne and attended by two *chaurī*-bearers, one on each side. The latter figures convey religious dignity to a certain extent, yet by frequent repetition they become monotonous, and further, such themes betray a lack of freedom and narrowness of vision in artistic effort. The apparent reason why the artists abandoned the wider field of the *jātakas* which allowed full opportunity for the display of their powerful imaginations and superior technical skill, was that the ruling class and their officials professed a different religion and had therefore no interest in themes which reflected the glory of Buddhism; while such subjects as gods or kings seated on richly bedecked thrones and accompanied by princely attendants suited the idea of the majesty and grandeur of their own faith. Representations of this class are found in great abundance both in Buddhist and Hindu art from the latter part of the sixth century A.D. onwards, and notable imitations of them may be seen in the murals of Padmanābhapuram in Travancore State, which belong to the eighteenth century or even later.

In cave XXVI, which is supposed to be one of the latest caves at Ajanta, there are inscriptions which palaeographically cannot be assigned to a later period than the sixth century A.D., and it appears that for political reasons the monasteries and the temples of Ajanta lost their religious importance about this period although Buddhism survived at Ellora for another century, i.e. down to the close of the seventh century A.D., or even somewhat later. In the ceilings of the Buddhist temples and monasteries of Ellora there are traces of painting, but the designs are of a set type, representing floral and creeper patterns, geometric devices, including the key-pattern in several forms, jewellery designs, and wood-work motifs, all of which can be seen in their original forms on the ceilings of the earlier temples at Ajanta. The colours at Ellora are dull and insipid, perhaps owing to deterioration caused by weather conditions, since the caves of Ellora are more exposed to the sun and the rains of the monsoon than are those of their rivals at Ajanta.

In the ceiling of the porch of the great Brāhmanic temple, Kailāsa, there are some layers of painting which may be contemporaneous with the original cutting of the temple, about the middle of the eighth century A.D., or a little later. In one of them a Brāhmanic deity is represented in the act of adoration (Plate LII b). He is riding on a *sārdula*, a mythical monster with the head,

mane and paws of a lion, and the horns of a bull or a buffalo. The head of this god bears a striking resemblance, both in conception and treatment, to the heads of the Bodhisattvas in the earlier paintings at Ajanta, but the other figures of this painting have been shown in such ugly attitudes that the beauty of feature and the religious expression conveyed in the delineation of the heads have lost their effect owing to the uncouthness of the poses. The treatment of the limbs further exhibits a disproportionate attenuation; and the conventional forms of clouds, though copied from Ajanta, add in this subject to the general crudeness of the scheme. The colours also do not show a refined taste and the deterioration of the artistic sense is felt in every feature of the painting.

In a circular band on the ceiling of the above-mentioned porch, another design may be noticed in which Yama and his consort are shown riding on a buffalo. There are two attendants in front of the buffalo, and some other figures behind the animal. The treatment of the hair, particularly the coiffures of the women, is in the Ajanta style, but the angular curves of the elbows and knees and the ghastly stare of the eyes show that the artist has lost his skill in giving proper shape to the limbs and appropriate expression to the faces. As the paintings of Kailāsa have been found in several layers, one above the other, it appears that the paintings of the temple were executed at different periods, and the picture representing Yama should doubtless because of its debased style be assigned to the ninth or tenth century A.D.

In the porch of the Kailāsa are some more paintings executed on the architraves below the ceiling. Their date can be fixed with greater certainty, for they contain inscriptions mentioning the Paramāras of Malwa, who wielded much authority during the twelfth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> The paintings of the architraves represent battle-scenes which both in spirit and technique appear to be allied to the North Indian (Rājput) paintings, and their connexion with Ajanta seems to be somewhat remote (Plate LIII *a*). The drawing of the elephant in these subjects suggests rapid movement, but the figures of the horses have become rather conventional owing to the artist's freakish fancy in painting them all in a rearing attitude.

At Ellora the ceilings of the Indra Sabhā group of Jaina temples are also adorned with painting, and the representations of the *apsaras* as shown therein are more akin to their prototypes at Ajanta than to their parallels in the Brāhmanic cave at Kailāsa described above. Owing to the heat of fires kindled for domestic as well as religious purposes, and the blackening effect of smoke, the original colours of these paintings have suffered much, but in places where they are in a comparatively better state of preservation the colours show the fondness of the artist for the use of vermilion (Plate LIII *b*).

<sup>1</sup> For a description of these paintings see the author's paper, *The Fresco Paintings of Ellora* (p. 9), read before the XVIIth International Oriental Congress, held at Oxford, 1928, also the *Annual Report of the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad*, 1933-4, pl. i.

The figures of the *apsaras* with dark brown or swarthy complexions floating in the midst of the scarlet clouds of the evening appear with considerable perspective effect, and the grace of their limbs and the charm of their jewellery and dress, however scanty, are also admirably represented. Jaina artists were good copyists, and as the spirit of their religion has much in common with that of the Buddhist faith, the figures of the *apsaras* in the ceilings of the Indra Sabhā suggest almost the same beauty of pose, grace of movement, and love of decorative detail as one notices in the figures of the *apsaras* painted in the monasteries of Ajanta. The art of Ellora is, however, purely imitative and does not show any creative power. In the chapter on sculpture it has already been stated that the Jaina group of Ellora caves was hewn during the ninth century A.D.<sup>1</sup> and the painting of the ceilings of the Indra Sabhā appears to belong to the same period.

In concluding this brief survey of the painting of the Deccan it should be observed that the art of the country in the best period of its history is essentially Buddhist, both in spirit and in its outlook upon life. It must have originated, as has been stated above (p. 49), many centuries earlier than the advent of the Buddhist missionaries,<sup>2</sup> but the humane teaching of this faith and the doctrine of unity binding the different aspects of nature into a common organism, inculcated in the sacred Buddhist literature, inspired the artist with visions embracing every phenomenon of the physical and the spiritual worlds. The majestic elephant, the beautiful swan, or the care-free deer with their nimble movements, the mischievous monkey, or even the venomous serpent, are all alike, as members of the family of life, capable of showing forth the divine qualities of sympathy and mercy. In the artist's themes they are represented with all their natural characteristics, proving a close study of their instincts and physical features. The *rājās* and *rānīs* play the religious role, but are pictured with all the desires and inclinations, and in all the adventures, of their normal life, including hunting expeditions, love episodes, the life of exiles in the forest, battle-scenes, and the gay life of the court.

The domestic life of the ordinary people is also fully represented, and the artist has shown the same zest in delineating their bamboo huts and earthen utensils as he has in depicting the gorgeous pavilions of royalty with all their paraphernalia. The beauty of trees and natural scenery made a special appeal to his imagination, because the Buddha had attained enlightenment sitting under a banyan tree, while several other stately trees are associated with him in his previous incarnations, or in his next life as Maitreya. The painter has therefore delineated them in a variety of styles, in their spring grandeur, and also in autumnal beauty with red and pale brown leaves.

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 43.

<sup>2</sup> In the Raichur District, since A.D. 1914, three Aśokan edicts have been discovered, one at Maski and the remaining two at Kopbal, both places being situated in the ancient gold area of the Deccan. For further information regarding these edicts see Monographs Nos. 1 and 10 of the *Hyderabad Archaeological Series*.

Human emotion is the salient feature of the art of Ajanta; but the religious element has given it on the whole a solemn tone and there is no air of wantonness in the entire panorama of Ajanta paintings. There are lovely women daintily arrayed and shown in delightful poses but the environment is instinct with the tears of things, and the dread solemnities of life are ever felt as present in the background. The subtle pattern of life has been executed with sympathy and love, with all its dark shades of pain and sorrow, anguish and disappointment, and its bright colours of joy and ecstasy, glory and success, controlled by a divine law, but responsive to the longings and needs of man through the power of religious faith and devotion.

The standards of beauty of the human body do not of course coincide with those of Europe in the classical period, but the drawing of the Ajanta figures is not less effective than that of their European prototypes in regard to feminine grace of form and charm of pose, or masculine vigour and strength, activity and effort. In vividness of expression generally, and in religious feeling in particular, the paintings of Ajanta far excel their contemporaneous rivals in Europe. Such technical details as 'cast shadows' are rarely to be seen at Ajanta, but in the ceiling of cave II the cherubs, plump, rosy *ganās*, at the four corners, have their necks below the chin painted in vermilion of a dark shade which contrasts with the fair complexion of their faces to give rounded effect.<sup>1</sup>

The high level of intellectual and technical development in the art of painting attained near the end of the fifth century began to lose its excellence about the middle of the sixth century A.D., when Ajanta gave place to Vātāpi, with a new dynasty professing a different faith. At Ellora in the work of another dynasty, the Rāshtrakūṭas, an after-glow of the art of Ajanta may be seen, but it had lost its splendour and was soon to fade. An aftermath is also to be noticed in the ceilings of the Indra Sabhā and Jagannātha Sabhā at Ellora, and that was perhaps its last phase in the Deccan.

"The glories of this art shone forth in far distant lands, in the rugged mountains of Afghanistan, in the lonely deserts of Central Asia, in the age-worn cultural climes of China and in the sea-girt lands of Ceylon, Java and Japan, but in the Deccan, the province of its own birth, its light grew dim by the eighth century A.D.,<sup>2</sup> and we see the last flickering of it in the frescoes of Aurangabad and Ellora."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Ajanta*, ii, pl. xxx.

<sup>2</sup> The wall-paintings of Bāgh in the Gwalior State and of Sittannavāsai in the Pudukottai State show the influence of the art of Ajanta in Malwa and Southern India. The paintings of Bāgh, being earlier (fifth or sixth century A.D.), exhibit the art in a more vigorous form than do the murals of Sittannavāsai, which have been assigned by experts to the seventh century A.D.

<sup>3</sup> G. Yazdani, *Indian Art of the Buddhist Period*, Oxford University Press, 1937, p. 14.

## APPENDIX A

### TERRACOTTAS

THE potter's craft, like that of the goldsmith, seems to have been intimately connected with the art of sculpture in ancient times. Potter and sculptor apparently had common religious ideals, and often executed identical or similar forms and artistic motifs through different mediums, the sculptor's being stone or metal or wood, and the potter's clay, which was baked and finally finished with slips in different shades.

In the excavations carried out at ancient religious sites in the Deccan terracotta figurines have been found in great abundance, notably at Kondāpur, a village some forty-three miles west-north-west of Hyderabad. It was apparently one of the thirty walled towns to which Pliny has referred in his work, because coins and other relics showing a well-developed culture have been discovered there in very large numbers. The number of terracotta figurines alone amounts to several hundred. These statuettes represent Bodhisattvas, *yakshas*, *yakshipīs*, and other religious or semi-religious beings (Plate LIV *a-d*). Animals are also represented, and they include the bull, the horse, and the ram among tame animals, and the lion among wild ones (Plate LV *a-c*). The figure of a parrot has also been found. Among other articles discovered are pieces of pottery with ornamental designs. They are very slender in manufacture with artistic shapes and fine polish. Some pieces on examination show that they were made of kaolin, while others are of fine reddish clays. The ware was coated with slips of varying thickness, the colours of the slips being cream or light pink. The designs worked out on the ware are very pleasing; besides ornamental motifs, there are several religious symbols, one of them being a half-opened lotus shown at the left hand in the third row on Plate LVI. Another represents the sacred wheel, to be seen in the fourth row, second from the right, and another the fully opened lotus blossom which occurs so frequently on the sculpture of Amarāvati, with which the antiquities of Kondāpur seem to be contemporary.

The figurines representing deities or religious personages are made of kaolin, and show fine modelling and delightful lines. As the features of these deities are non-Āryan, with thick short noses, thick lips, and round or oval faces, the potter had apparently people of his own stock in mind when he moulded the figures of the gods. The hair and head-gear are more conventional than realistic. In Plate LIV *a* the hair of the figure representing a Bodhisattva is shown in traditional stiff coils, a fashion which had become an essential feature of the hair of the Buddha in Northern India from about the second century A.D., and which reached the Deccan in that period or perhaps a century later. The other head in the same Plate (LIV *b*), representing another Bodhisattva or a *yaksha*, has a very elaborate head-gear; but the salient feature of this statuette is the look of innocence and serenity so admirably expressed by the face. In Plate LIV *c-d* two different personages are represented whose head-gear is of different types; the expressions of their faces speak of inward serenity. One of them has a smile on his lips. Another figure has his hair dressed straight down to his ears and neck and finally curled

up in a roll. This style of dressing the hair is more prominent in the two heads reproduced in the lower half of Plate LVII. The broad, prominent noses as well as the style of dressing the hair are reminiscent in these two figures of the representations of dandified fools and drunkards sometimes found in European art, as in the illuminated margins of medieval manuscripts, the stone carvings of gargoyles in cathedrals and churches, or the later didactic paintings of Hogarth. There is even a possibility that the craftsmen of the Deccan copied such features from contemporary Roman classical models, because at Kondāpur several baked clay ornaments on which the figures of Roman coins are impressed have been found; and there is literary evidence also to prove that a large trade was carried on between the Deccan and Mediterranean countries through the ancient port of Barygaza (modern Bharoch) on the western coast of India.<sup>1</sup>

The head of a Bodhisattva in Plate LVII *a* is modelled like many other Deccanese sculptures of the fifth century A.D., but the thick nose of Dravidian type shows it to be of earlier origin, some time in the third. The repose and internal calm of this figure are marvellous. The bulky *yaksha* (Plate LVIII *a-b*) represented with elaborate head-gear may be Kuvera, who was a popular god among the Buddhists during the early centuries of the Christian era. The style of the ornamentation of the head-gear resembles to some extent that of the decoration of the head-dresses of Saka or Parthian donors of cave-temples in Western India, whose statues may be seen at Kondāne and other Buddhist religious sites (Plate XXIII).<sup>2</sup>

The terracottas representing animal figures show neat workmanship and a definite trend towards realism. The head of the ram (Plate LV *b*) is a good example of the latter tendency, although the rolls of wool around the animal's neck have made the presentation somewhat conventional. The mane of the lion (Plate LV *a*) has somewhat the same stereotyped effect. The figure of the lion in general is rather dumpy, as are also the representations of the horse and the bull. The short, thick horns of the bull, its muzzle, and neck ornaments resemble very closely those of the bulls (*nandīs*) of the Śaivite temples of Telīṅgāna of the tenth to thirteenth centuries, and it appears that the traditions regarding the above features established by the potters of the early centuries of the Christian era were followed by the sculptors of the Deccan for over a millennium afterwards.

At Kondāpur terracotta figurines of a primitive type have also been found; they represent Hārītī and the mother goddess, Earth (Plate LVIII *c-d*), the latter having been found in very large numbers. Their workmanship is somewhat crude, and they are made of red earth, being solid in form in contrast to the kaolin figurines described above, which are hollow and were made in moulds.

In the excavations which have been carried out by the Archaeological Department of Hyderabad at Paiṭhan and Maskī a considerable number of terracotta figurines has been discovered, but they do not exhibit that fine craftsmanship which is to be noticed in the Kondāpur statuettes. The elaborate style of dressing and decorating the hair, as shown in these terracottas at Maskī and Paiṭhan, closely resembles the style of some of the early sculptures of the Buddhist *vihāras*, notably that of the head-dress of the figure carved at Bhājā.

<sup>1</sup> Pliny, xii, 84. Strabo reports that 120 ships sailed from Myos-hormos for India, when Gallus was prefect in Egypt (25 B.C.).

<sup>2</sup> See also J. Burgess, 'Buddist Cave Temples', *A.S.W.I.*, 1883, p. 9.

The pooriness of material, the insignificant size, and the frail nature of the terracottas are obvious defects because of which they can hardly be considered as definitely works of art, but none can deny the skill of the craftsmen in giving the figurines such vivid expressions, or in shaping them with such realistic effect.

## APPENDIX B

THE ART OF DANCING AS REPRESENTED IN THE  
SCULPTURE AND PAINTING OF THE DECCAN

REFERENCES have already been made to certain dancing scenes in the sections of this chapter on Sculpture and Painting.<sup>1</sup> Similar references may also have been made by other contributors to this volume who deal with the cultural and literary activities of the Deccan in the early period. The object of the present note is to familiarize the student with certain phases of dancing as it was actually practised, and as it is shown in the sculpture or painting of the Deccan. The history of Indian dancing based on literature or tradition is, however, not to be found in this essay, and the student must look for it in standard books on the subject.<sup>2</sup>

The sculptures of the *chaitya*-caves at Kondāne and Kārle belong to roughly the same period, that is the first or second century B.C.; and these sculptures are also contemporary with, or slightly later than, the painting on the left wall of the *chaitya*-cave (No. 10) at Ajanta, which on palaeographic grounds has been assigned to the early part of the second century B.C.<sup>3</sup> As the dancing steps and attitudes of the performers in the latter painting are not so clear there as in the sculptures at Kondāne and Kārle, it will be advantageous to the student if the steps and poses shown at the latter sites are studied first.

At Kondāne the art, as represented in Plates IV–V, is of a primitive type, comprising only leaping and whirling such as is to be seen in the dances of primitive tribes in India and its borderlands to this day. The four episodes carved at Kondāne however exhibit a considerably developed art in which reciprocity and balance are admirably maintained, both in the graceful movements of the limbs of the performers and in the attractive display of their emotional gestures. In subject (a) there are three artistes, the man being in the middle, with two women, one on each side of him. The swing and movement suggested by the bodies of the male dancer and the woman on his left are in happy consonance with their hints of amorous dalliance; the man stretches out his arm to caress the chin of the woman with his hand, while she has coquettishly lowered hers to finger the fringe of his girdle. The other arm of this woman is gracefully moulded with the hand on the hip. The bent knees of both figures suggest movement, as if they are dancing—perhaps taking alternate steps forward and backward like a swinging pendulum. The third artiste in this panel, to the left of the male figure, is also dancing but seems to be executing a figure of her own. She is, however, evidently a part of the group of

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, pp. 30–31, 45.<sup>2</sup> Like Bharata's *Nāṭya Śāstra*.<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, p. 48.



three since she has her hand on the bow-string of the male dancer. She may have been taking short steps forward and backward, or moving in a semi-circle while keeping her hold on the bow-string and thus her connexion with the other two in the dance.

In panel (*i*) the male artiste appears with one female dancer only, who has grasped his sash in the movement of the dance. That the man is a soldier was indicated by the bow in panel (*a*) and is shown in this panel by a heavy mace or club which he carries. The inclination of the heads of both figures and the way in which their arms are stretched out towards one another suggest graceful dalliance and convey a sense of balanced poise, while the bent knees and pressure of the body on the toes might be the prelude to any movement from the rhythmic easy step of a minuet to the swift whirl of a reel or a polka.

In panel V *a* the male artiste has occupied the alternate position, keeping the woman dancer to his left and inclining his own head towards her and also holding her waist-girdle with his outstretched hand. The poise of the male figure in this panel suggests violent activity, while the woman when left alone by her partner in the course of the dance would have floated softly with a graceful, swan-like movement.

In panel V *b* the male dancer appears alone; he has a square shield tied to his arm. His left arm is gracefully curved, and he has bent his left leg and placed it behind the right in such a manner that the toes of his left foot rest on those of the right. The right leg and foot are placed firmly on the ground and the entire body seems to rock on it in a most attractively graceful fashion. This may be a special dancing step, or an accepted way of acknowledging the applause of the spectators, since it is evidently the final episode of the performance shown in the previous three panels.

The dancer has a smile on his face, and as his features as well as his accoutrements are completely non-Āryan, it is interesting to note that dancing was clearly a well-developed art among the people of the Deccan even in the centuries preceding the Christian era, since it has already been pointed out that the *chitya*-cave at Kondāne was hewn at some time during the second century B.C.<sup>1</sup>

On the façade of the *chitya* at Kārle, which is nearly the same age as its rival at Kondāne, are carved figures of dancers in twelve panels. It will not be possible, owing to limitations of space, to describe them all here, but four of them which most vividly exhibit grace of poise and agility of movement are studied below. The dancers appear in pairs of male and female figures. They are aborigines, as is shown by their costumes and ornaments. The male figures have narrow pieces of cloth wound round their heads like turbans or pugarees: their loin-cloths are also very narrow, but artistically draped, and the scarfs round the arms and shoulders of all the figures are tastefully arranged. The ornaments are heavy and solid but plentiful, matching the exuberant spirit of the dancers (Plate XXIV *a-i*).

The use of heavy anklets by Indian women from their girlhood has perhaps an adverse effect on the shape of their legs, and this may be the reason why they are generally represented as disproportionately thin in their lower part both in the sculpture and the painting of the Deccan, particularly in the early period (Plate XXVIII *f*).

<sup>1</sup> *Sarguz*, p. 3.

In Plate XXIV *a* both the man and the woman have curved their bodies, but the position of their legs suggests active movement, some kind of one- or two-step or fox-trot. Their arms are placed fondly round each other's shoulders and the inclination of the head of the woman with the expression of contentment to be noticed on her face is very effective. She is wearing a large set of ivory or conch bangles round her wrists,<sup>1</sup> and heavy metal anklets above her feet. The five-string ornament round her waist is attractively executed.

The next subject (Plate XXIV *b*) perhaps represents reversing in the dance; the woman dancer who was on the left of her male companion in the last scene is now on his right. She has raised her arms and joined her hands to suggest that she is tired of her partner and desires to run away, although he is still clasping her. In the mimic struggle her dress has become disarranged, a device to suggest sexual feeling.

The third subject (Plate LIX *a*) shows the pair again dancing. The woman's steps, from the poise shown, appear to be short but quick, the man's comparatively long but slow. The woman has placed her arm round the waist of her male partner to maintain her balance in dancing, while with the other hand she has raised her head-scarf, or ornament, to suggest an emotional mood. The male dancer has placed his arm in a caress round the shoulders of his partner while his bent head suggests that he reciprocates her advances.

The last subject (Plate LIX *b*) shows both the figures as if they have just come to a halt, their poses showing that the dance is that moment over. The waist ornament of the woman and the cloth girdle of the man have been disarranged by the movement of dancing. The girl wears an expression of pleasure and happiness while her companion's features also show enjoyment. He holds a bouquet or a large lotus flower in his left hand. Among the ornaments of the woman the anklets especially are extremely thick and heavy.

The earliest painting at Ajanta in which dancing is represented is that on the left wall of cave X, which, as was stated above, belongs to the second century B.C., if not earlier.<sup>2</sup> The painting has a religious significance, for the dancing is shown near the Bodhi-tree under which Gautama received the enlightenment. There are fifteen artistes, of whom three are dancers and the rest musicians. They are all female. These women apparently belong to the orchestra attached to the monastery in the garden of which the Bodhi-tree is shown. Two of the musicians have long trumpets, which may be either of horn or of metal. The others are clapping their hands, an action which is still used in India and other oriental countries to mark time, or to produce the high pitch effect in music. Among the dancers one has raised and curved her arms in a style which suggests that she is about to revolve on her toes. The other two have inclined their bodies on one side by bending one leg, and have curved their right arms gracefully upwards and placed the tips of their thumbs on their heads, while the left hand is placed on the hip on the same side, the object being primarily to keep the balance of the body while dancing in short wavy steps, and also to produce an effective pose by making two beautiful loops (or curves), one with the right arm and the other with the left. Just this pose and just such steps are quite common in India and may be observed in the dancing of the present day,

<sup>1</sup> Such sets of ivory bangles are still worn in the Deccan by Lambāda women and other primitive peoples.

<sup>2</sup> *Ajanta*, pt. iii, p. 1, n. 1.

but it is interesting to note that they were practised in the second century B.C. and must have originated still earlier.

Dancing in the same style is shown in a clearer manner in an episode of the Mahājanaka Jātaka, painted on the left wall of cave I, which is some seven centuries later than cave X. In this subject the dancer is wearing a skirt of striped silk and a full-sleeved jacket of brocade or some other embroidered stuff (Plate LX a). Her ornaments include rich jewels and her crown and hair decoration further suggest that dancing-girls received handsome fees for their performances. The pose of the artiste in this subject is almost the same as that of the two dancers in cave X, but the curves of her arms, wrists, and hands suggest an emotional intensity, evidently in accord with the movement of the other parts of the body, which shows a distinct advance upon the previous ideals and psychology of the art. The dancer has a band of musicians to help her in the performance; they are again all women. Two of them are playing cymbals, one a pair of *ṭablas* (tympanum drums), another the *mizang* (a double drum with a narrow ring between the two parts), and a third a guitar or some other stringed instrument with a bowl at the end, and two flutes. The variety of musical instruments also shows development in the art of music. The two drums pictured in this painting have the usual leather strips round their bowls, such as are to be noticed tied on the *ṭablas* even at the present time. Sir C. V. Raman, the eminent physicist, is of the opinion that the Indian *ṭabla* was the first instrument of its kind from which all the seven notes of music could be produced, and that this effect was secured by dividing the top leather covering into three circular bands, brown, white, and black, each of varying thickness. Further, for the purpose of stretching the top leather, sixteen strings were tied round the bowl of the *ṭabla*. This drum travelled to the West from the East, and although the seven notes of music can be produced by the kettle-drum, or tympanum-drum, and although Beethoven has also used a tympanum-drum as an independent instrument of music, yet in India the *ṭabla* was used much earlier, as is shown in this painting of the fifth century A.D.

In cave I there is another dance-scene delineated on the left wall of the front gallery. The painting is much damaged but the figures of two dancers can easily be made out (Plate LX b). The performance is shown as taking place in a royal pavilion in which a Nāga king and queen are seated on a cushion in a mood of dalliance, and a large number of maidservants and male guards are either occupied in serving refreshments (?) or watching the dance. A princely person dressed in a long coat of embroidered stuff, among the designs of which the figures of geese and oxen can be made out, may be seen sitting between two pillars on the opposite side to the Nāga king and his royal consort.

The steps of the dancer near the Nāga pair are not clear to us because she has moved behind the cushion to let the pair have full privacy in their love-making. But her raised arm, and the hand, in which she holds a short stick, indicate that she is still dancing, while a mischievous side-long glance of her eyes suggests that she is showing amusement at the conduct of the royal pair.

The principal dancer may be seen near the feet of the Nāga queen, but the face of the artiste is towards the chief dressed in the long embroidered coat. The lower part of the body of the dancer is considerably damaged in the original painting, but the right hand placed on the hip, and the right leg bent at the knee and raised

up to the knee of the left leg can easily be made out, and suggest that the dancer had poised herself on one foot, in readiness for a sinuous undulating movement. The head of the dancer is charmingly posed in this painting.

About a century later than the two dance-scenes of cave I at Ajanta, described above, is the Aurangābād sculpture of cave VII, which represents a group of seven artistes, of whom the one in the middle is a dancer. As the subject is carved in the shrine of a monastery, it would seemingly represent a performance which was in vogue in Buddhist temples as a part of the ritual on the occasion of certain feasts. The sculpture has much in common, in regard to the pose of the dancer and the musical instruments of the orchestra, with the dance scene painted on the wall of the left corridor of cave I at Ajanta (Plate LXI *a*). The artistic dress of the dancer noticed in the Ajanta painting is, however, not to be seen in this sculpture, but the poise of the body and the suggestion of movement are more effective in the sculpture than in the painting. The dancer has only the toes of her right foot touching the ground, but the right leg, although bent at the knee, would have supported the body when the dancer moved herself in graceful curves, and took steps forwards and backwards, or sideways. The musical instruments shown in this group are the cymbals, the flute, the pair of *ṭablas*, and a round drum.

Under the influence of Śaktism the organizations of dancers and musicians attached to the Brāhmanic temples developed both in magnitude and artistic qualities during the medieval period (eighth to thirteenth centuries), and large numbers of most lovely dance-poses may be seen on the exteriors of temples in the Deccān. The Great Temple at Pālampet, which was built during the reign of the Kākatīya king, Gaṇapati, in A.D. 1213, has figure-brackets representing female dancers in characteristic attitudes.<sup>1</sup> Four of these sculptures, which are of black stone of a close-grained variety, will be described here. Emotional gestures, which are an essential adjunct of the art of dancing in India, are shown with much effect in these representations. In Plate XXXVIII *b* the curves of the body alternate rhythmically; the loop made by the right arm, which is raised, is balanced by the curve of the left arm, which slants in the opposite direction; similarly the curve of the right leg, which has been made by raising the foot, is matched by the outward inclination of the hip on the left side and the bend of the left leg. The exquisite manicured fingers with their delicate movements, suggestive of an emotional temperament, and their symbolic bendings, add to the artistic effect of the pose; and the attitude of the body appears to have changed at each step taken by the dancer.

Subject (2) perhaps represents the second step in the course of the dance, because in this representation (Plate XXXIX *a*) the artiste has raised and bent her left leg instead of the right, as in the previous subject. Her two arms are raised and the fingers are spread and joined in a most expressively charming way. The beauty of a slender, pliant waist and well-developed breasts is accentuated by the curving, wavy line of the entire body, which rises and falls with gentle and sinuous grace.

The third subject (Plate XXXIX *b*) evidently represents an intermediate step, in which the dancer has curved her right leg in front of the left; but only her toes rest on the ground, the heel being raised above it. The gesture made with the fingers is significant and apparently corresponds to the meaning of the steps as

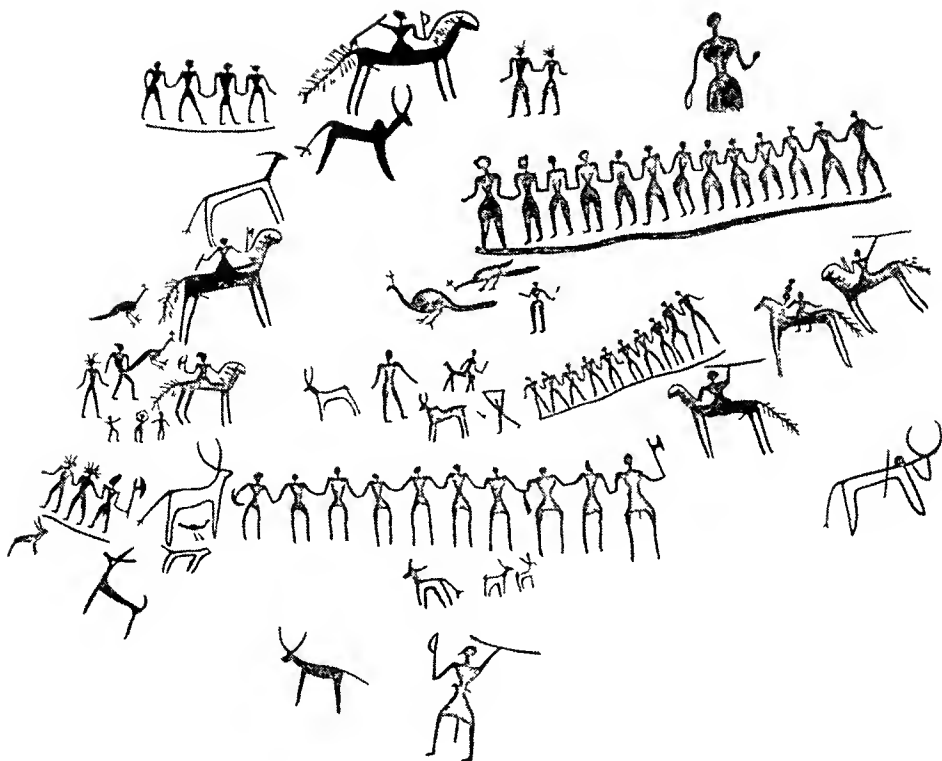
<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 45.

part of an artistic pattern. The fourth subject (Plate LXI *b*) also represents a dancer, whose lower garment has slipped down in dancing, while a mischievous little monkey is pulling at it. The representation may possibly have some mythical reference, but to a layman the subject seems to be unpleasingly erotic, and sculptures demonstrating sexual love are indeed to be seen in great abundance on medieval Brāhmanic temples; in the Great Temple at Pālampet also, described above, there exists a vast array of *maitheya* pairs, most of them in indecent attitudes. Otherwise the lines of the body of this particular dancer are so drawn as to give a rhythmic effect.

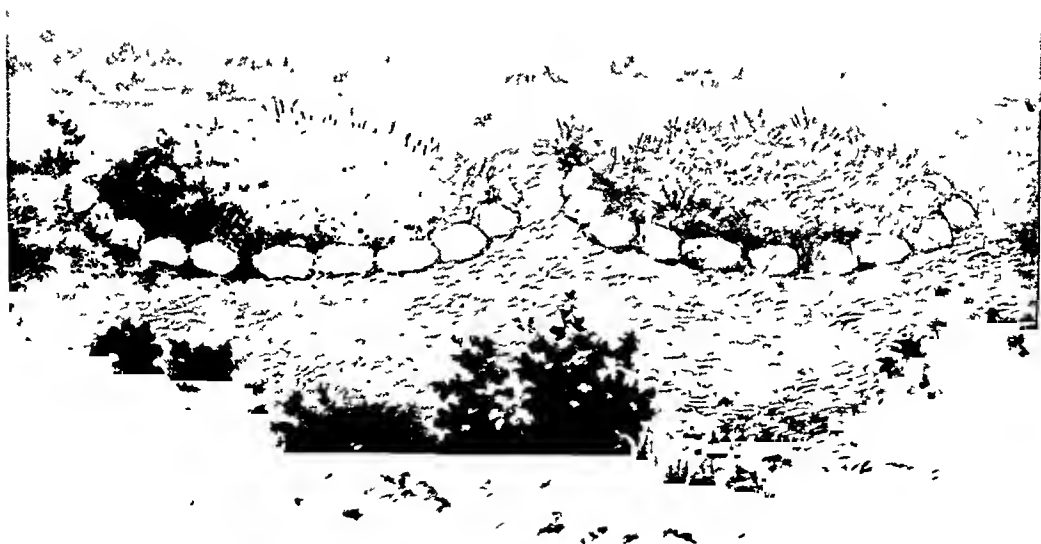
The art of dancing reached its high-water mark in the Deccan in the thirteenth century A.D., and although it has survived in some of the South Indian States up to the present day, much of its grace and vitality are lost. Only the semblance still exists; the spirit has vanished.

# PLATES



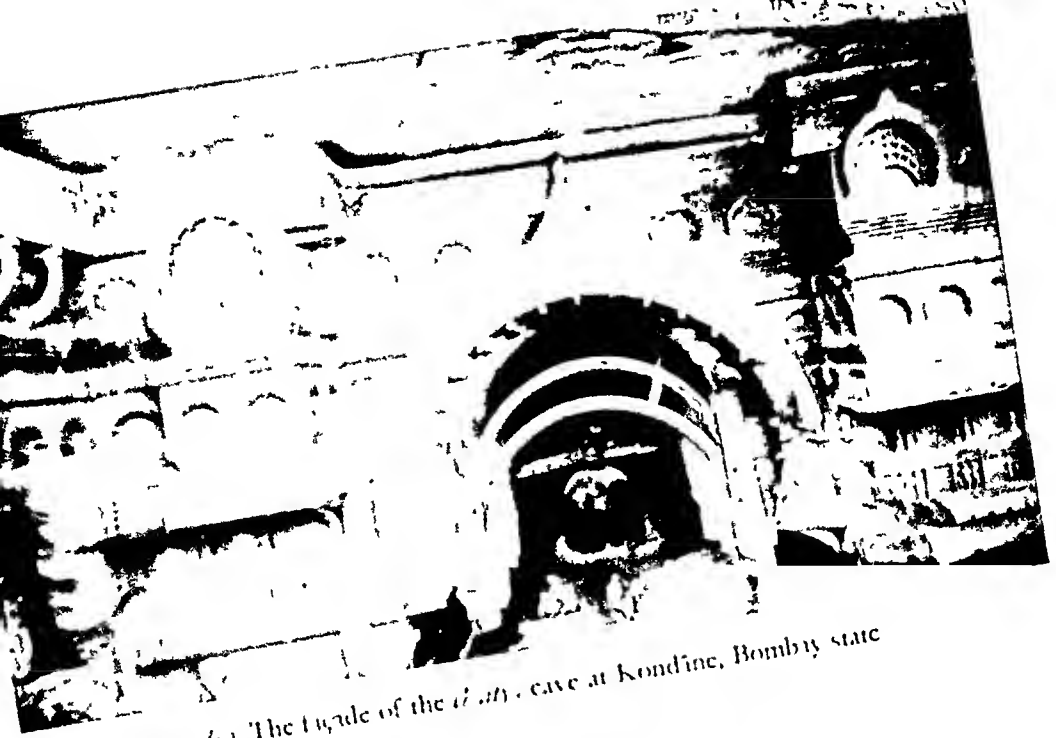


(a) The hunting scene painted on a rock at Benkal, Hyderabad state

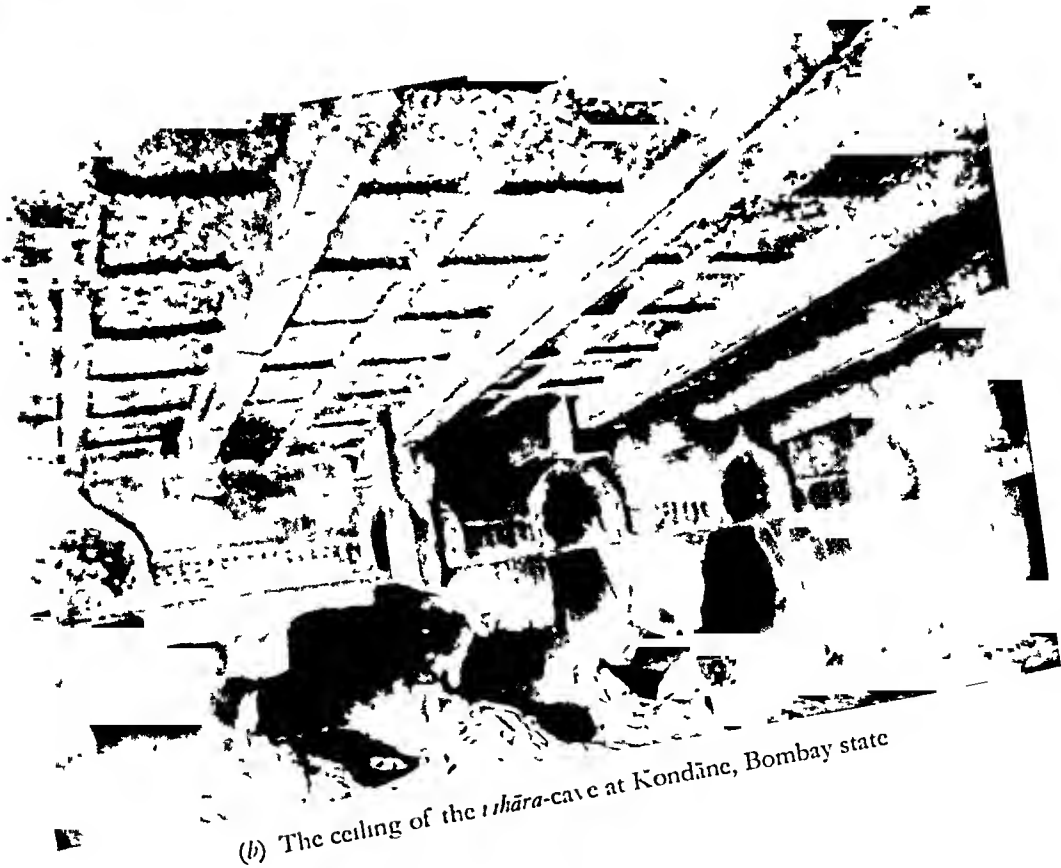


(b) Cairns with stone circles, Hyderabad state





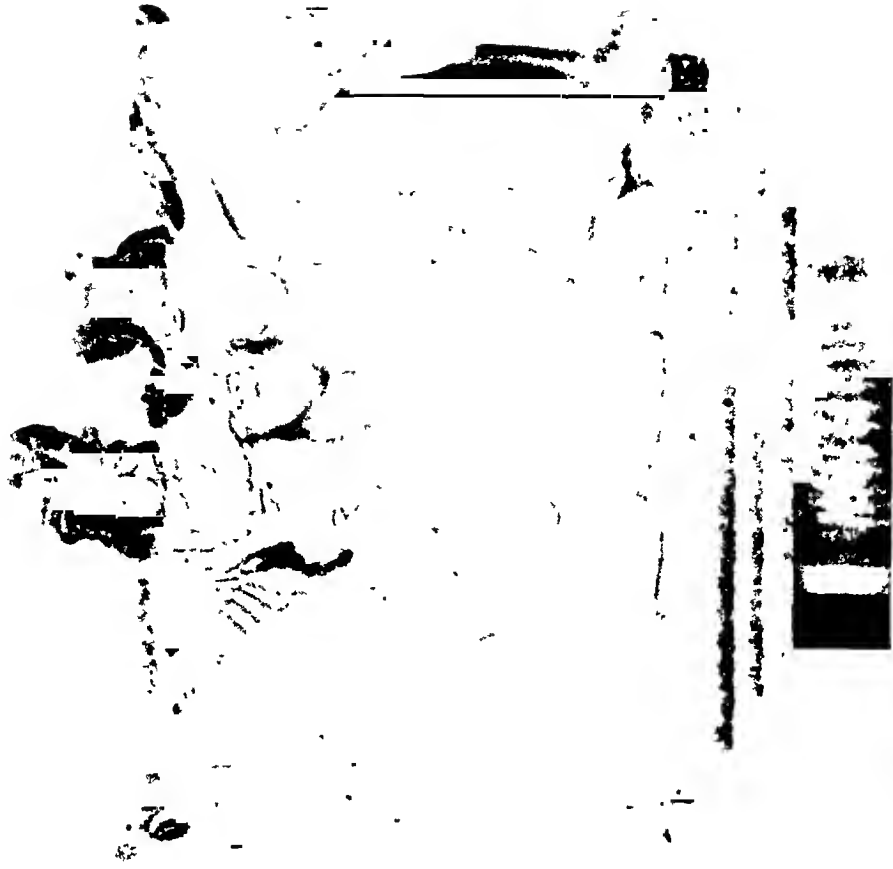
(a) The facade of the *Udaya*-cave at Kondane, Bombay state



(b) The ceiling of the *Udaya*-cave at Kondane, Bombay state



(a) The *Campeya Jātaka*, Amarāvati,  
Madras state



(b) A *Yaksha* and *Yakshini*, the *chattravati*, Bombay state



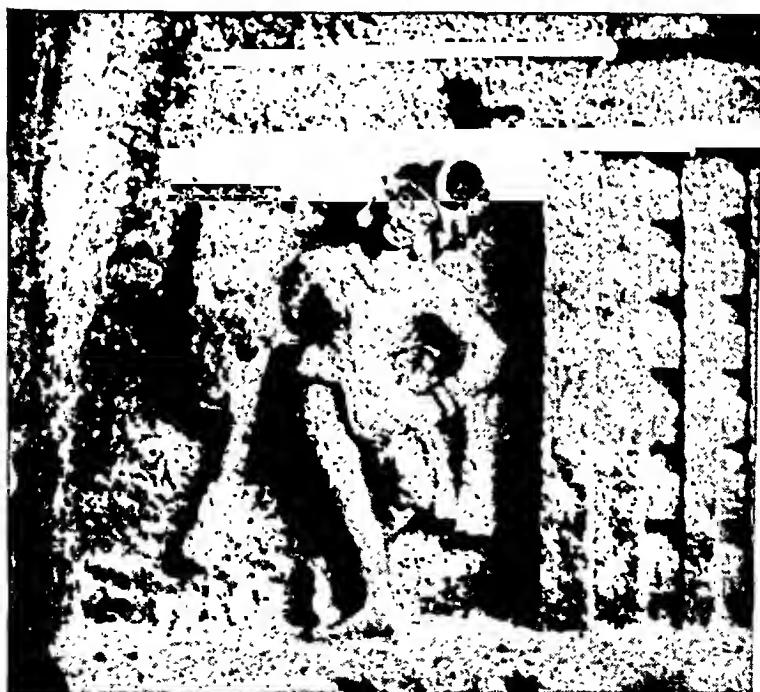
(a) The dancers, façade of the *Konda*-cave, Konda, Bombay state



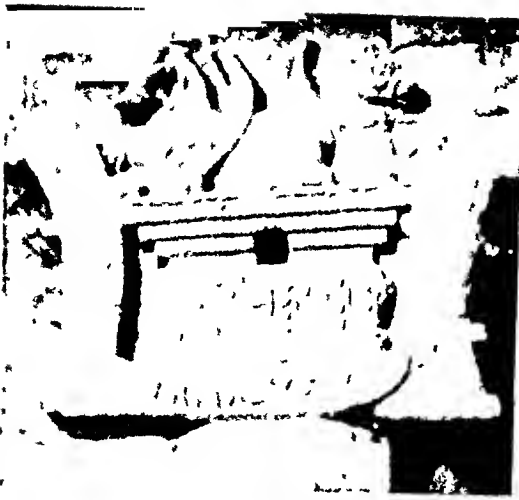
(b) The dancers, in the same cave



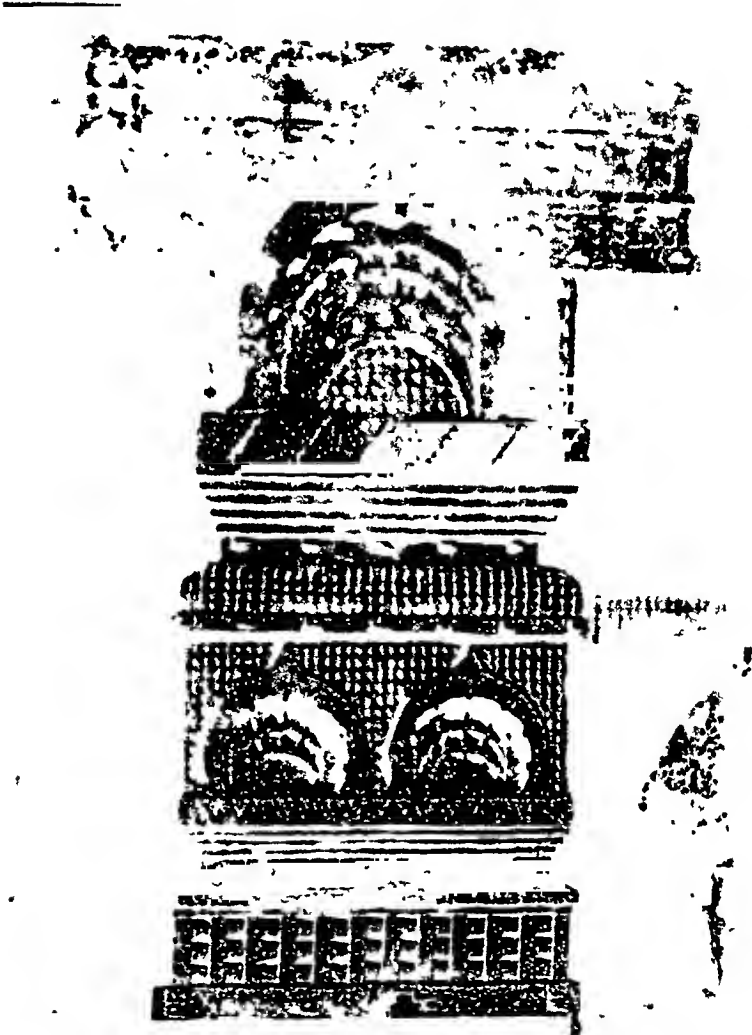
(a) The dancers, the *chaitya*-cave at Konḍāṇe, Bombay state



(b) The dancer, in the same cave

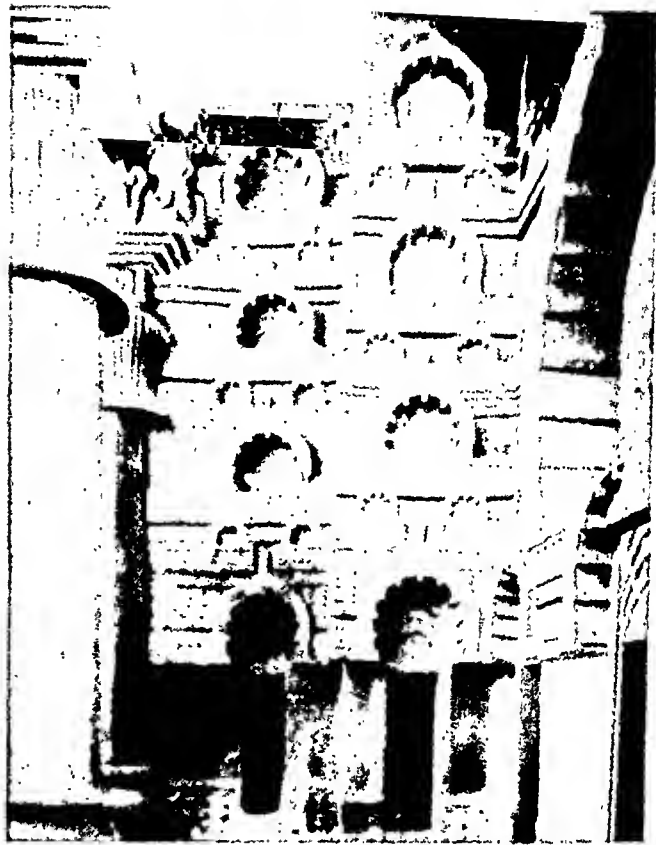


(a) The winged animal above the capitals of pillars, Pillar horā, Hyderabad state



(b) The pyramid-shaped parapet, the *chaitya*-cave at Kondāne, Bombay state

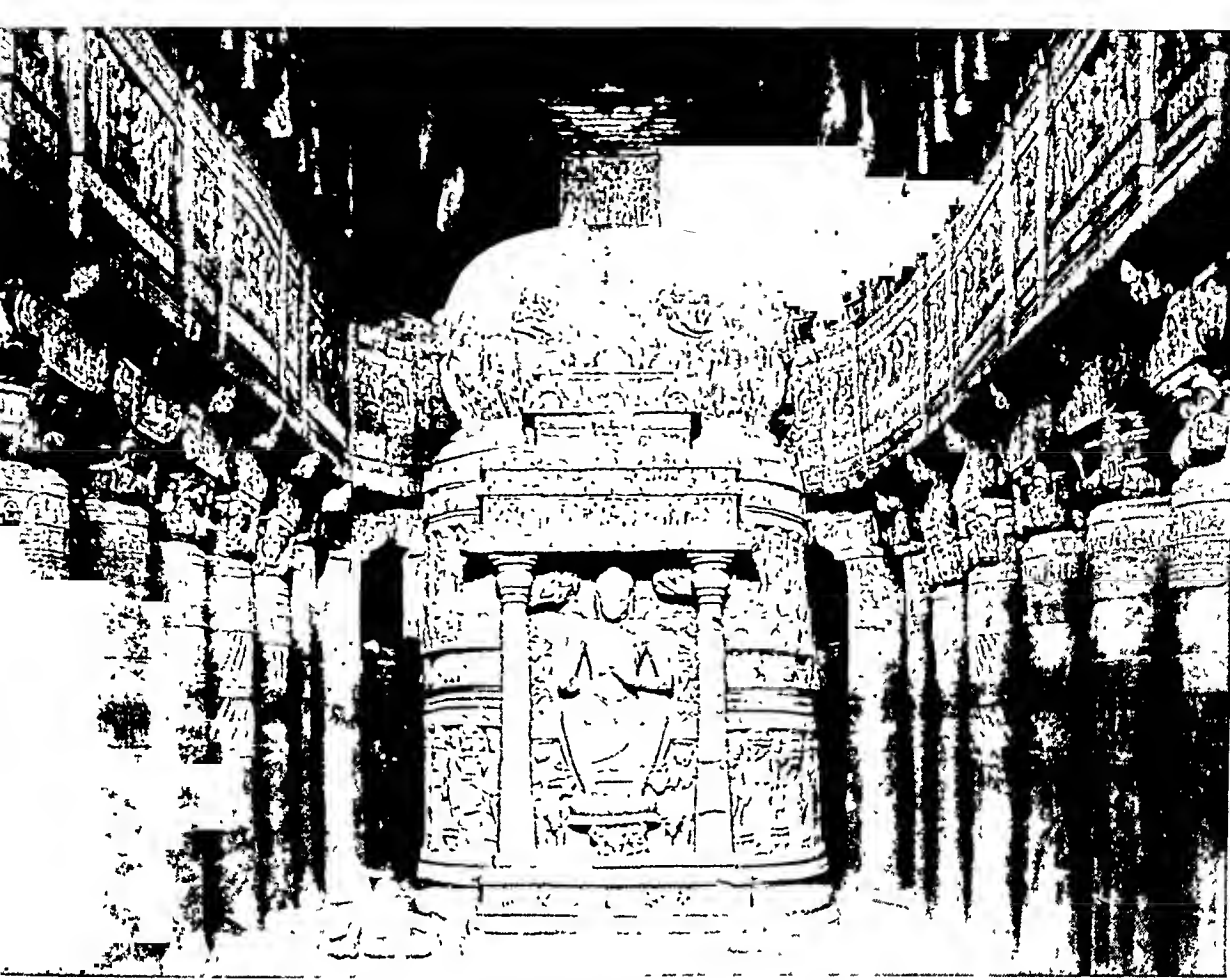




(a) The carving on the left wall of the veranda, the *chaitya*-cave at Bedsī, Bombay state

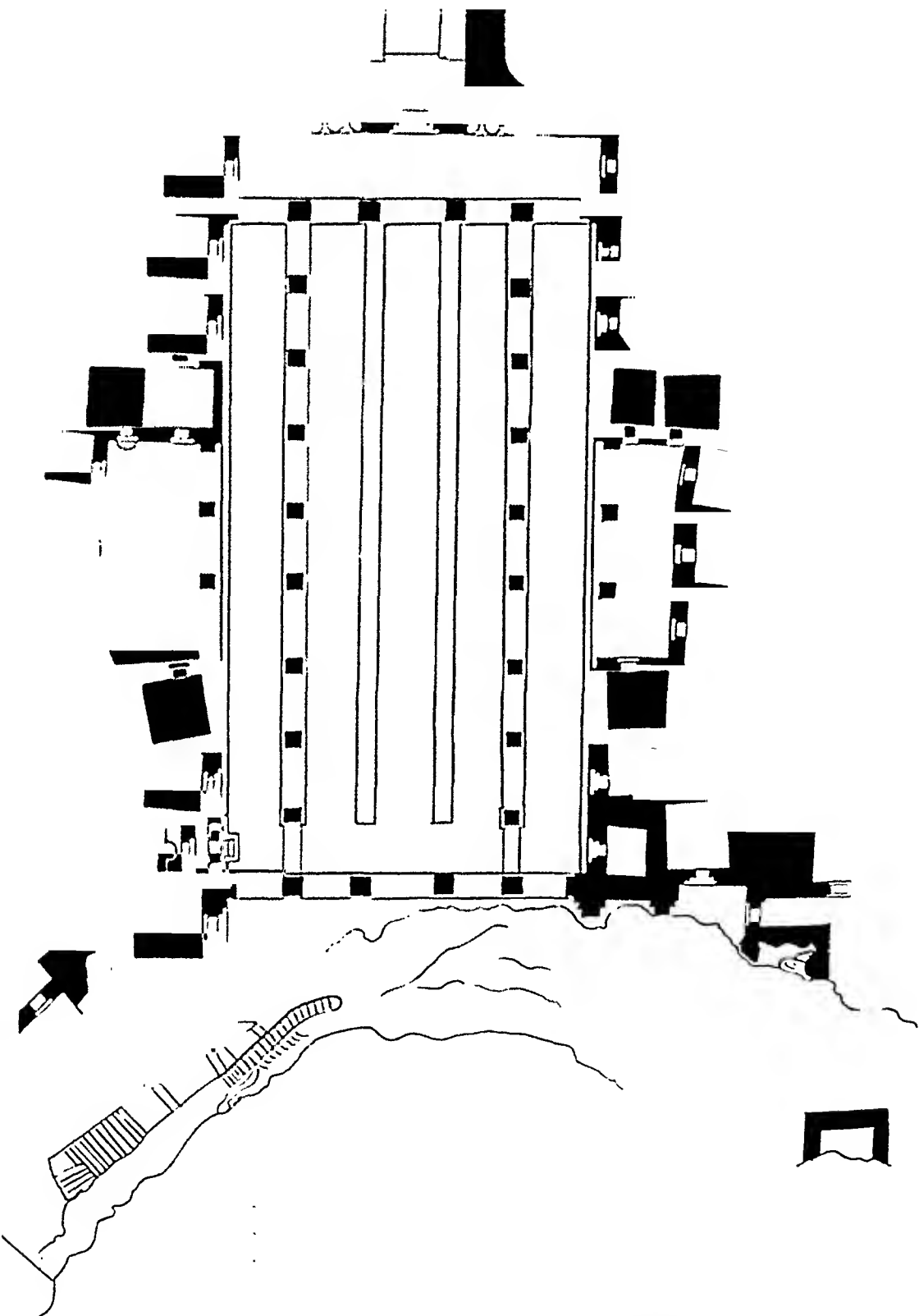


(b) The hall of the *chaitya*-cave XIX, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



The hall of the *chaitya*-cave XXVI, Ajanta, Hyderabad state

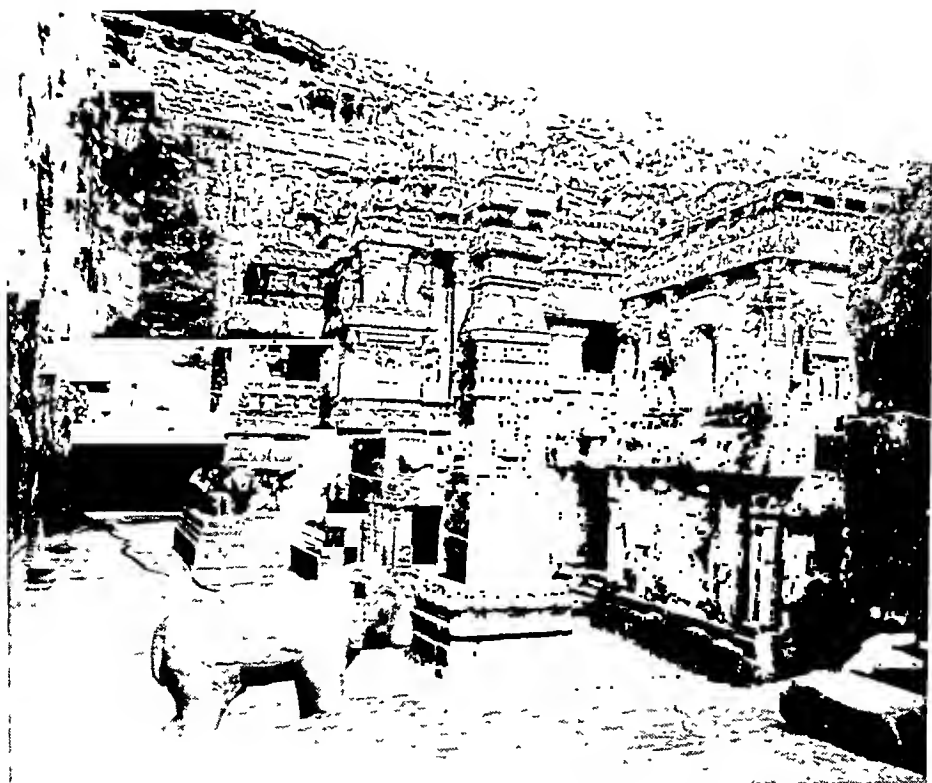




Plan of the Mahārwaḍar, Cave V, Ellora, Hyderabad state



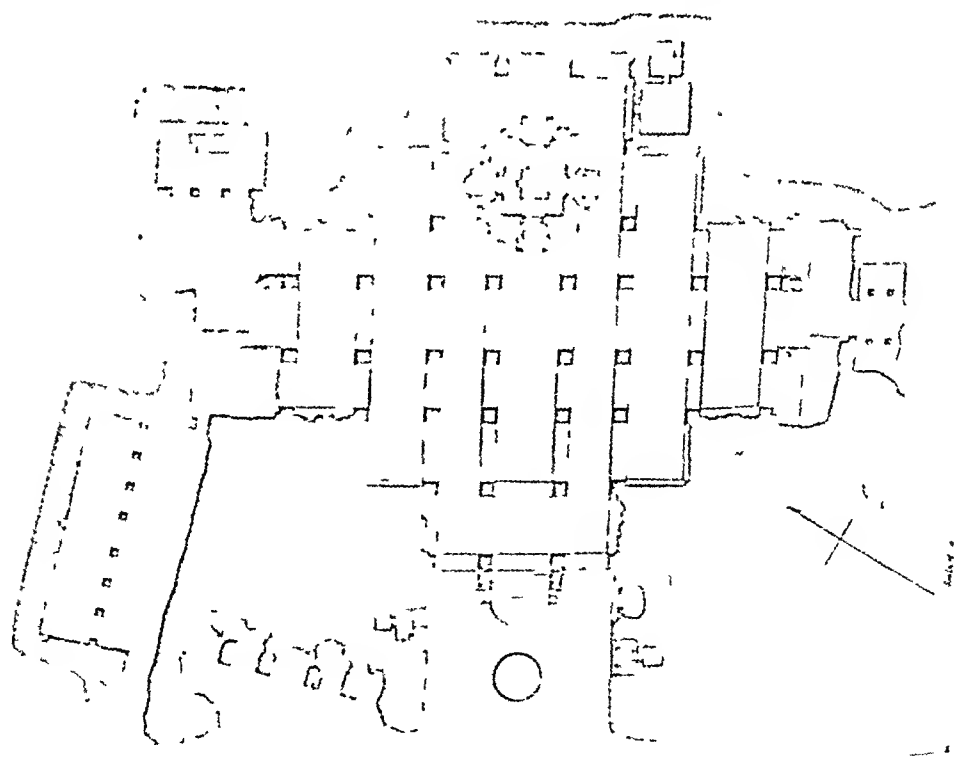
(a) Pot design on the pillars of Cave XII, Ellora, Hyderabad state



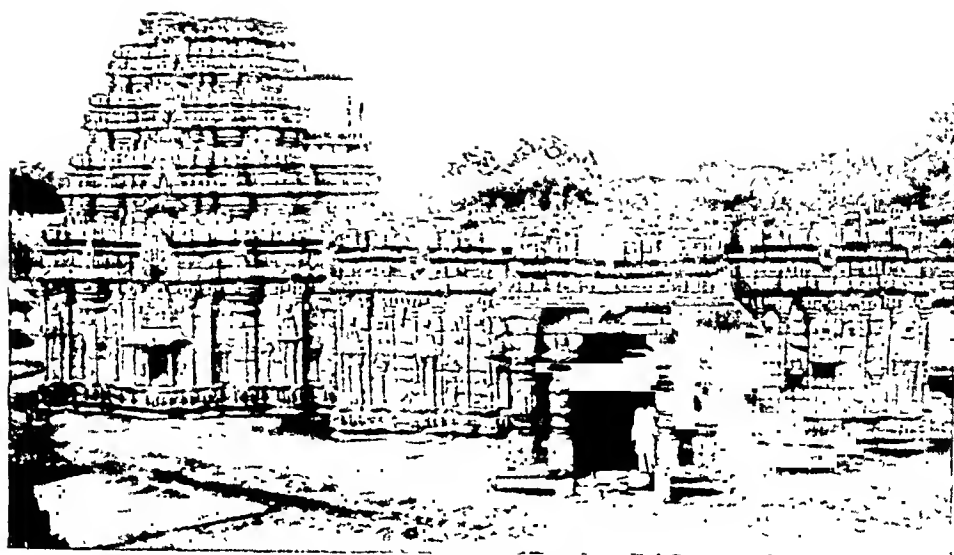
(b) The monolithic temple, Kailāsa, Ellora



(a) The back gallery of the Kailasa, Ellora, Hyderabad state



(b) Plan of the Dhumar Lena, Cave XXIX, Ellora



(a) The Mahādeva Temple at Ittagī, Hyderabad state



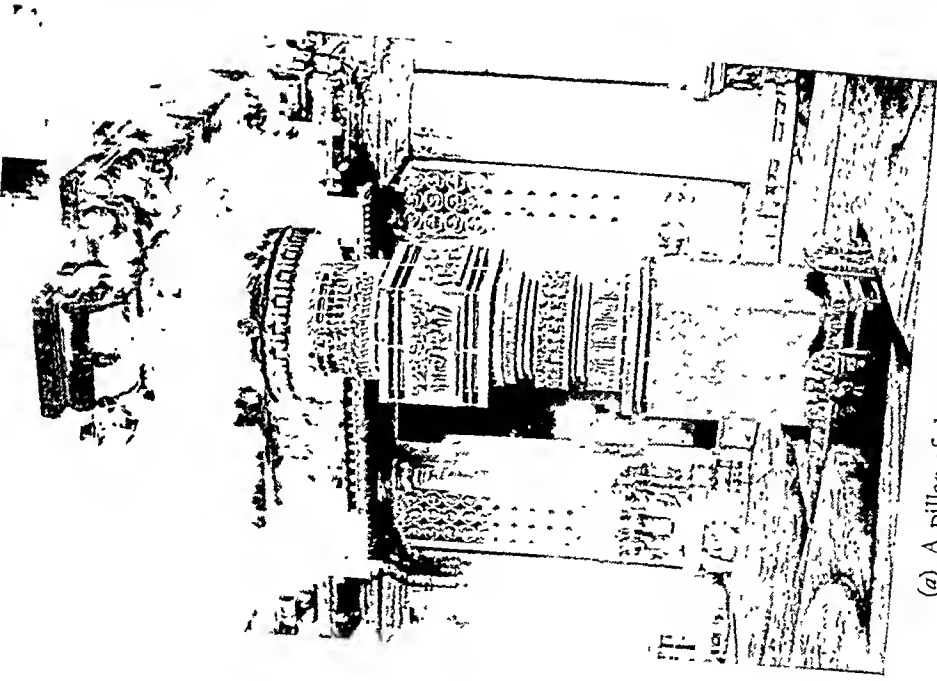
(b) Temples of Ālampur, Hyderabad state



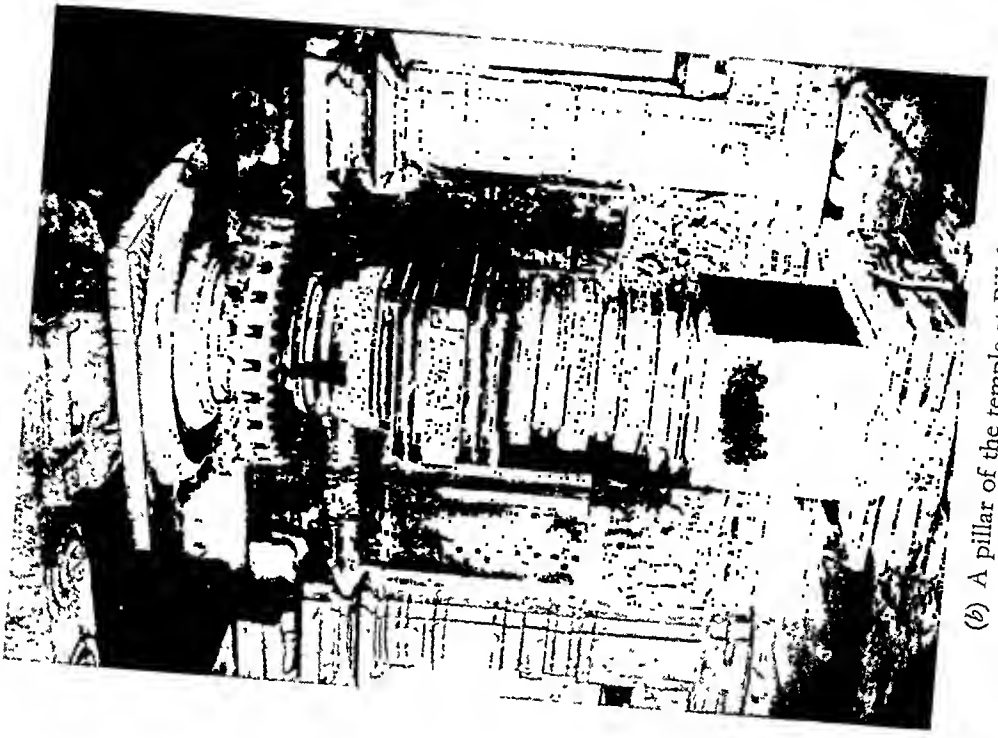
(a) Government Museum, Hyderabad



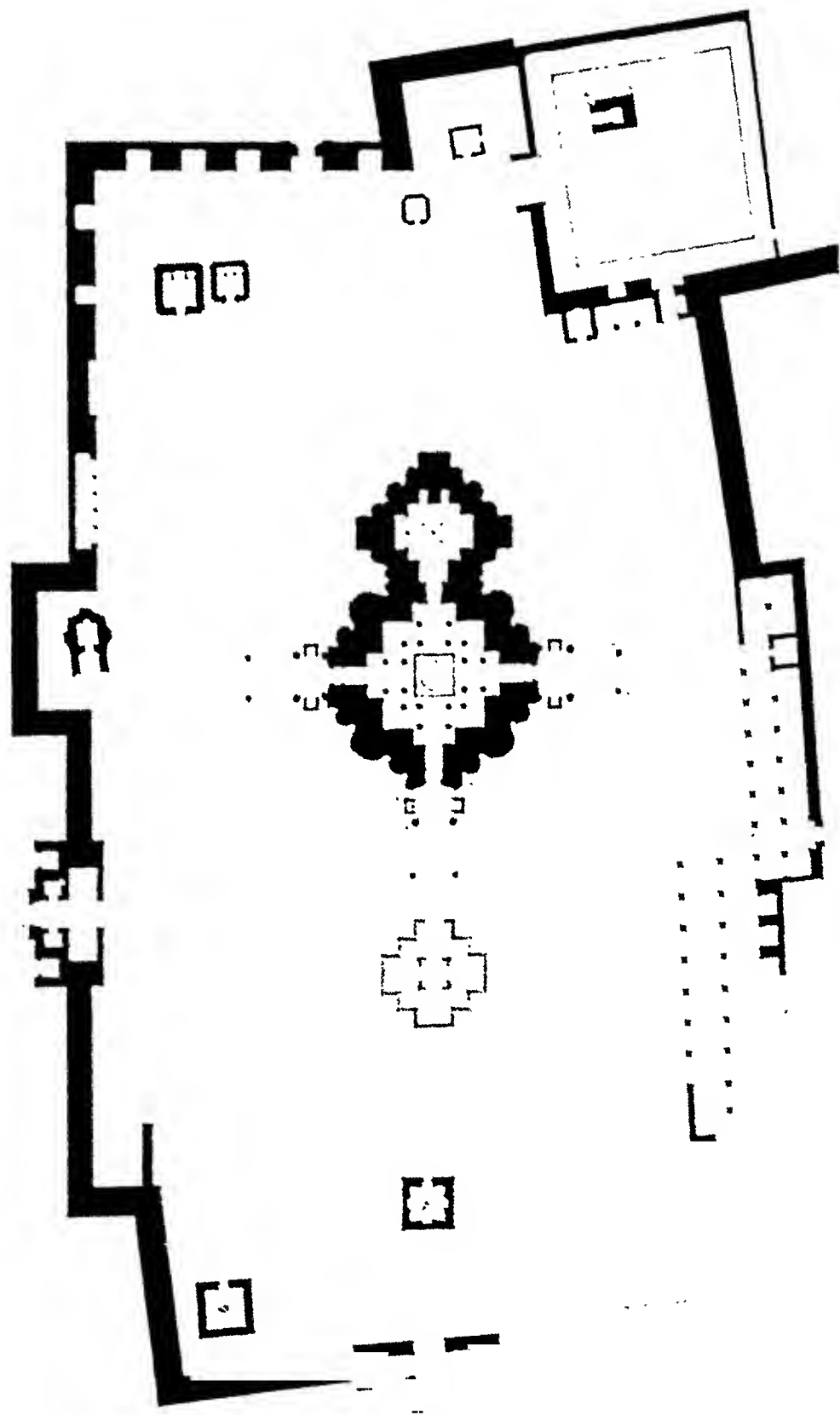
(b) The triangular slabs of the ceiling of the Pavilion in the Hyderabad Museum



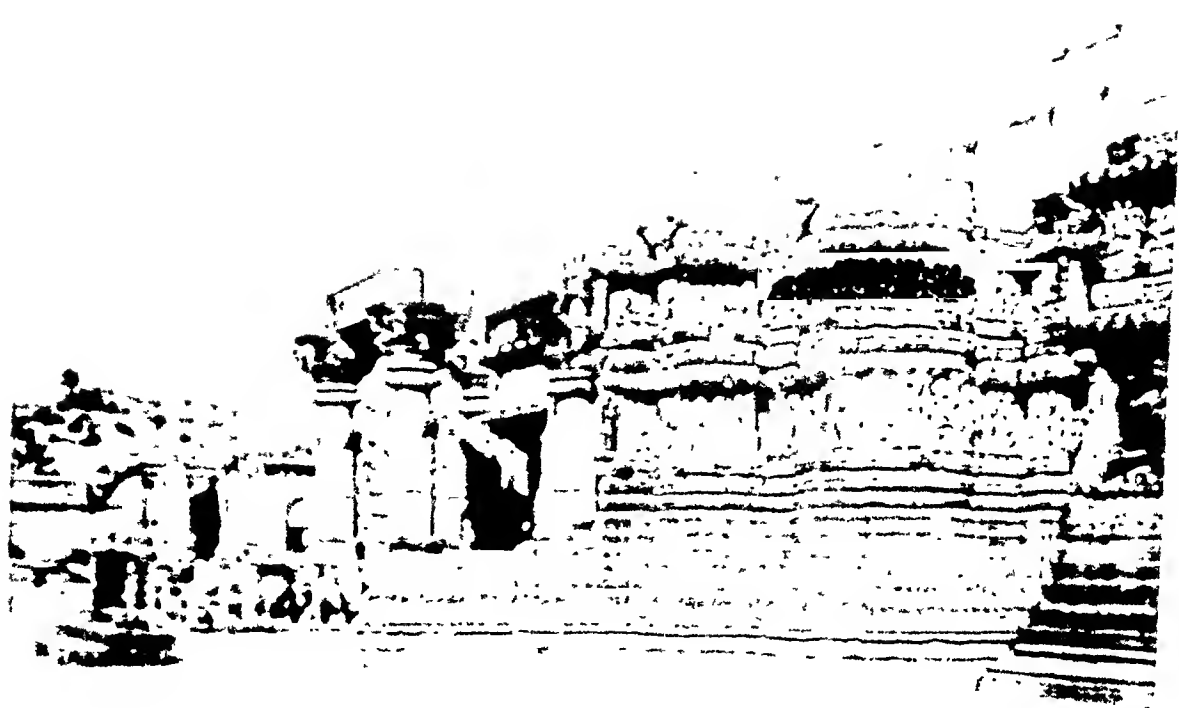
(a) A pillar of the temple at Palampet,  
Hyderabad state



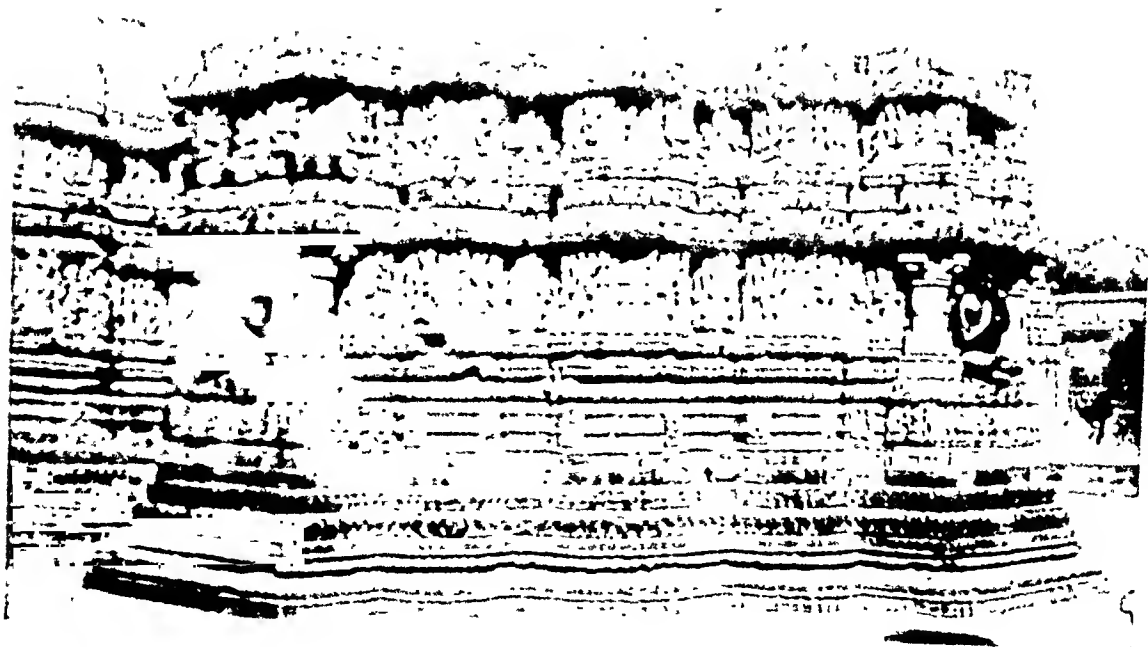
(b) A pillar of the temple at Pillalmari,  
Hyderabad state



Plan of the temple at Aundha, Hyderabad state

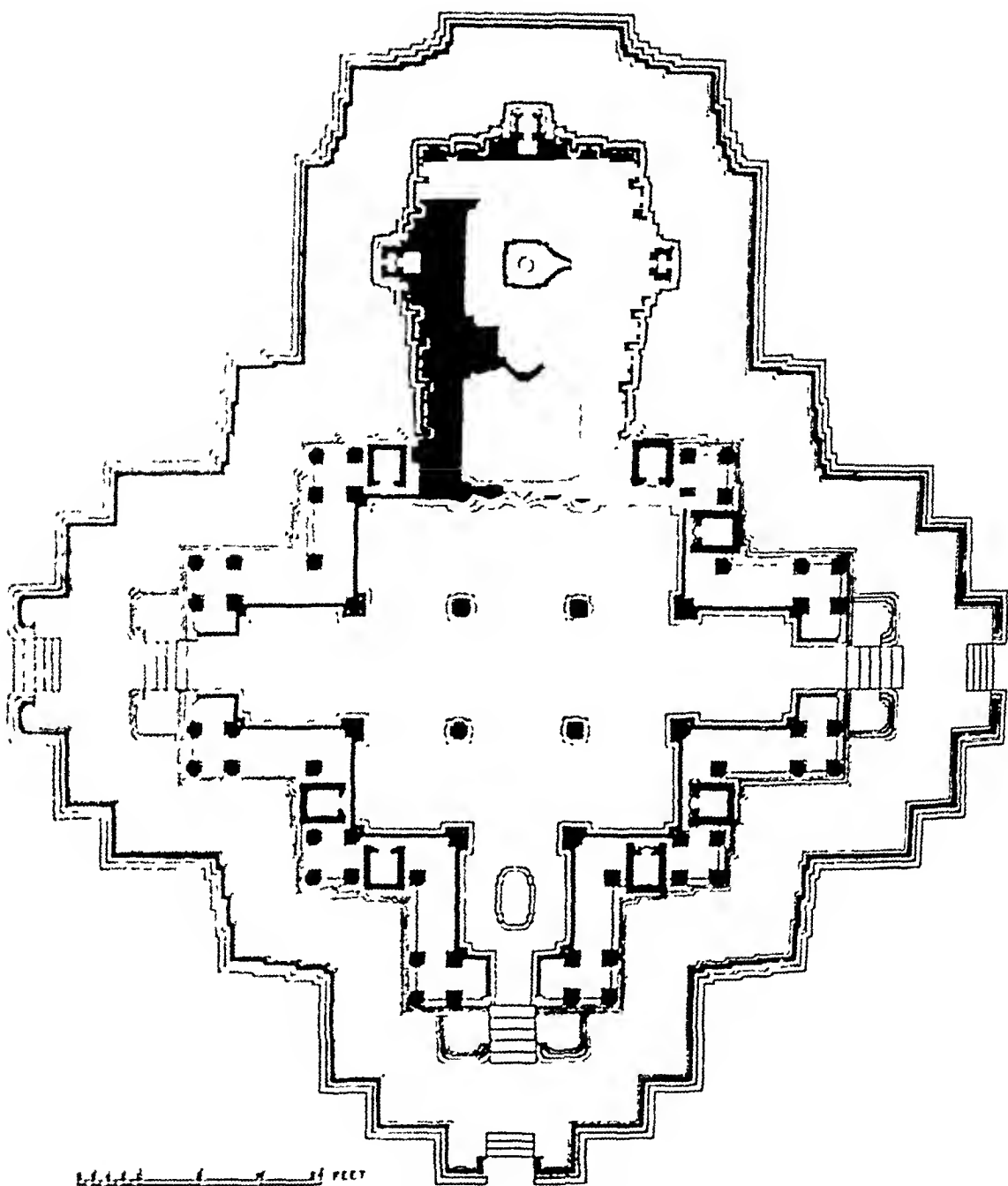


(a) The same, Eastern half



(b) The same, Western half





Plan of the temple at Pālamet, Hyderabad state



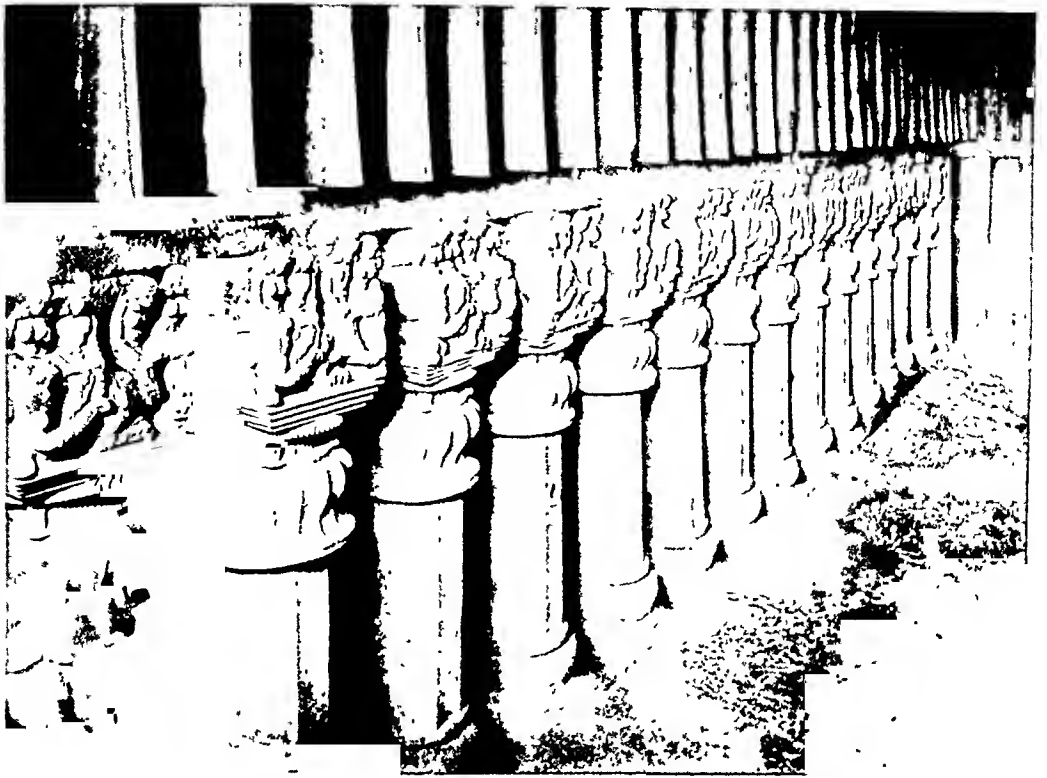
The statue of the donor of the *chaitya*-cave, Kordāne, Bombay state



(b) The same pair reversing in the dance



(a) A dancing pair, the *chaitiya*-cave, Kārle, Bombay state



(a) The pillars with elephant-riders of the *chaitya*-cave, Kārle, Bombay state



(b) The elephant-riders upon two pillars, the same caves



(a) The frieze representing a herdsman with fabulous animals,  
Amarāvati, Madras state



(b) Worship of the symbols of the Buddha with the lotus design in the middle,  
Amarāvati



(a) The lotus design on a column at Amalāvati, Madras state

(b) The lotus design on a column at Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(c) A varland issuing from the mouth of a crocodile, dwarfish human figures supporting the varland, Amarāvati, Madras state



(b) A Prince with a horse and two attendant ladies, Amarāvati



(a) The alms-box of the Buddha, Amarāvati, Madras state

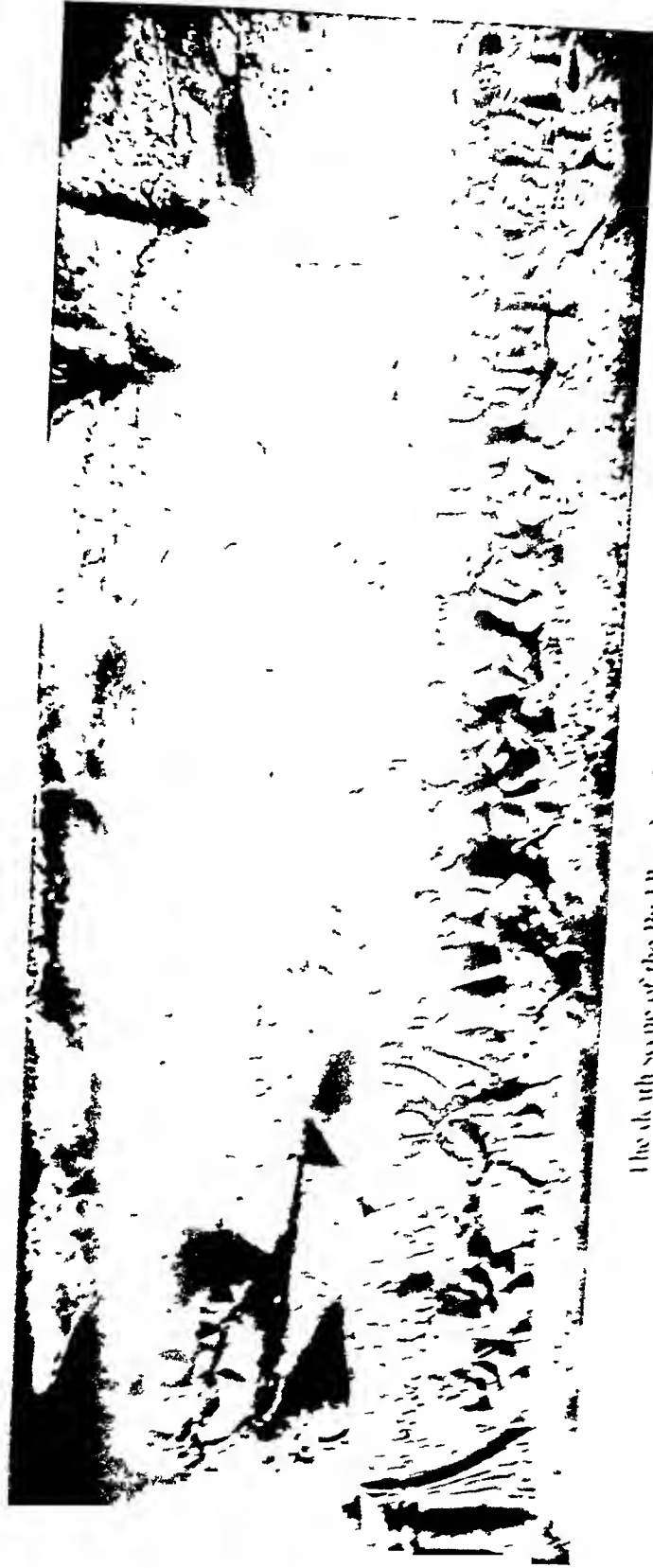


(b) A representation of the *stūpa*, Amarāvati

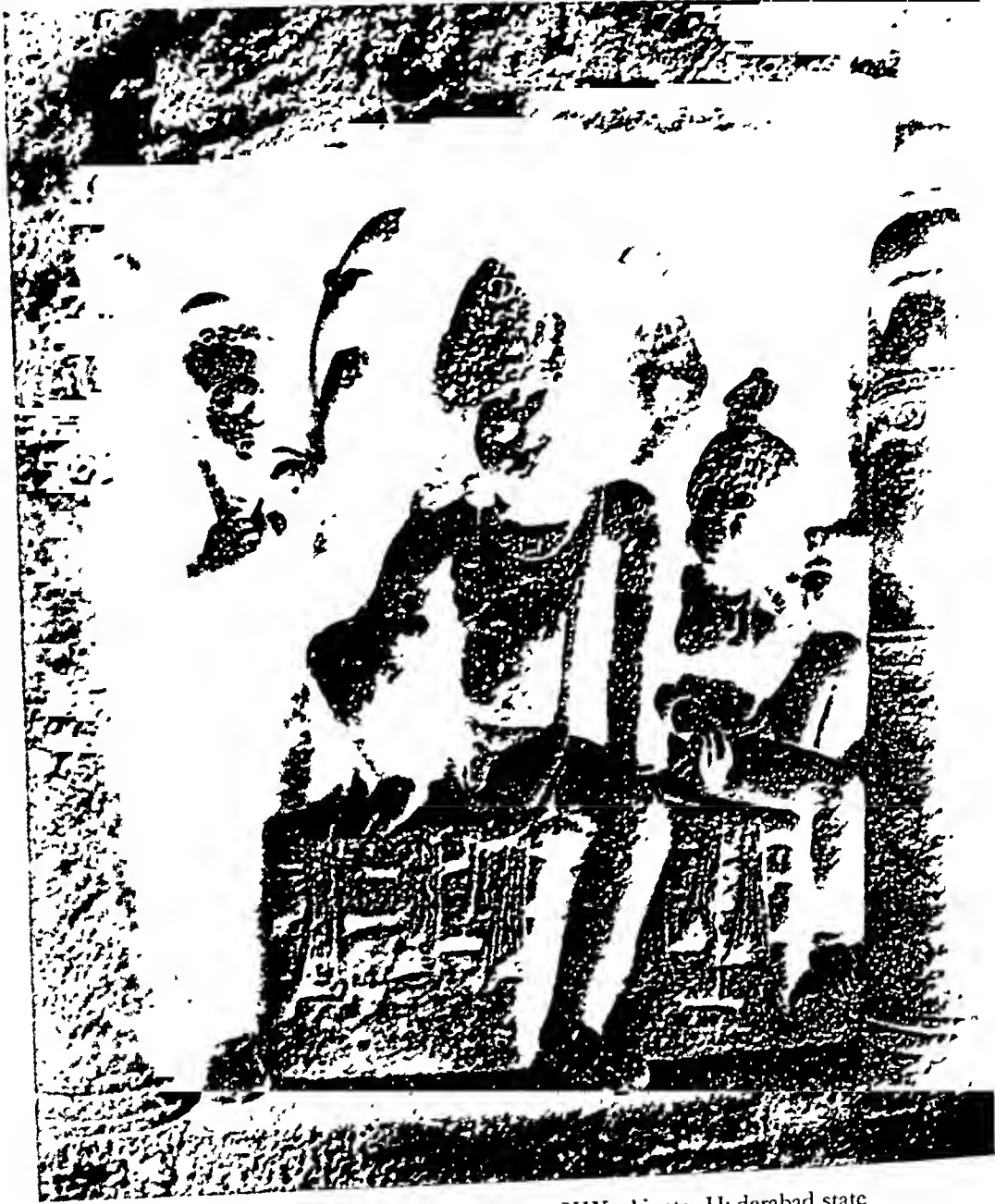




The Buddha in the shrine of Cave I, Ajanta, Hyderabad state

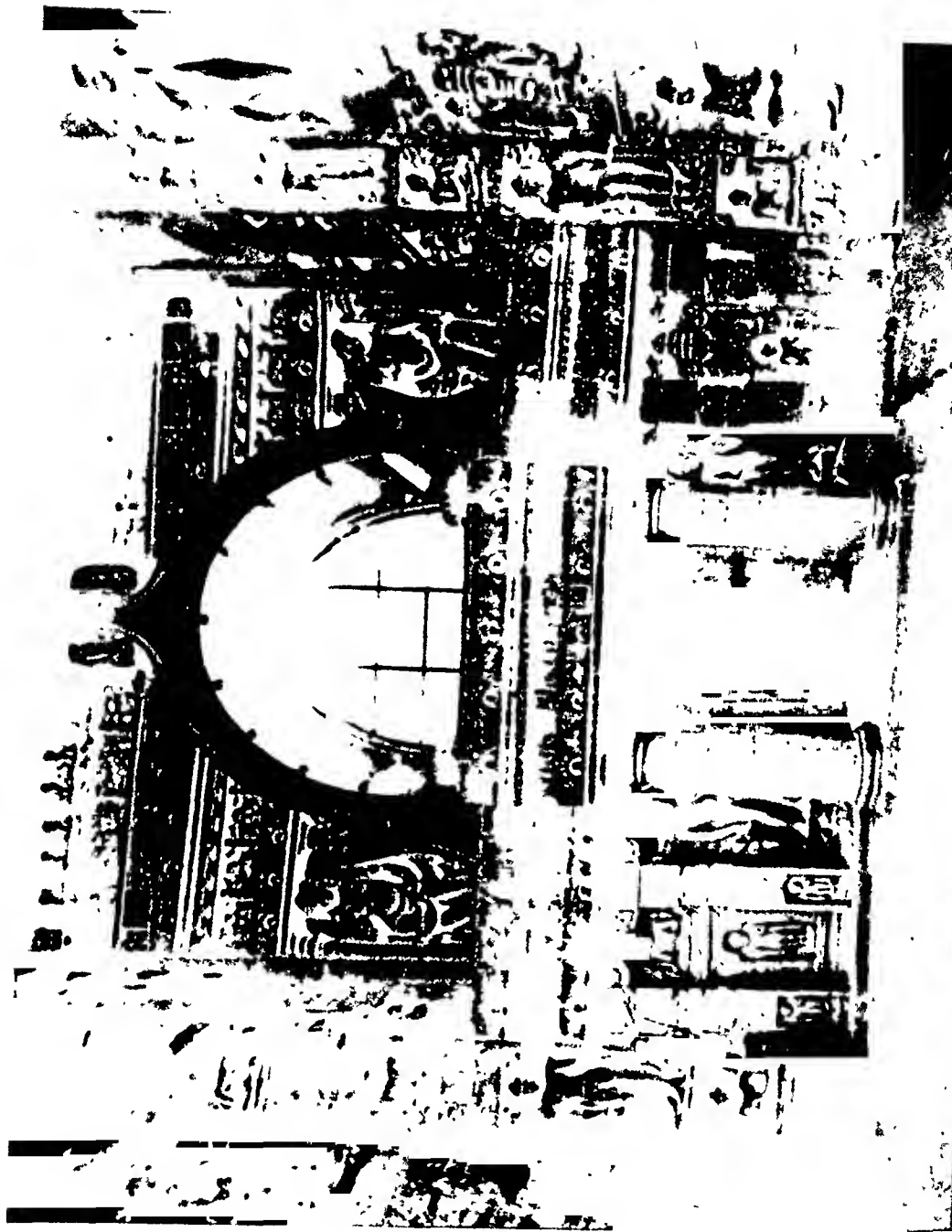


The death scene of the Buddha, Cave XXVI, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



The Nāga Rājā and the Nāginī, Cave XIX, Ajanta, Hyderabad state





The façade of Cave XIX, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(a) Four deer with a common head, Cave 1, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(b) Bhairava in Cave XXIX, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



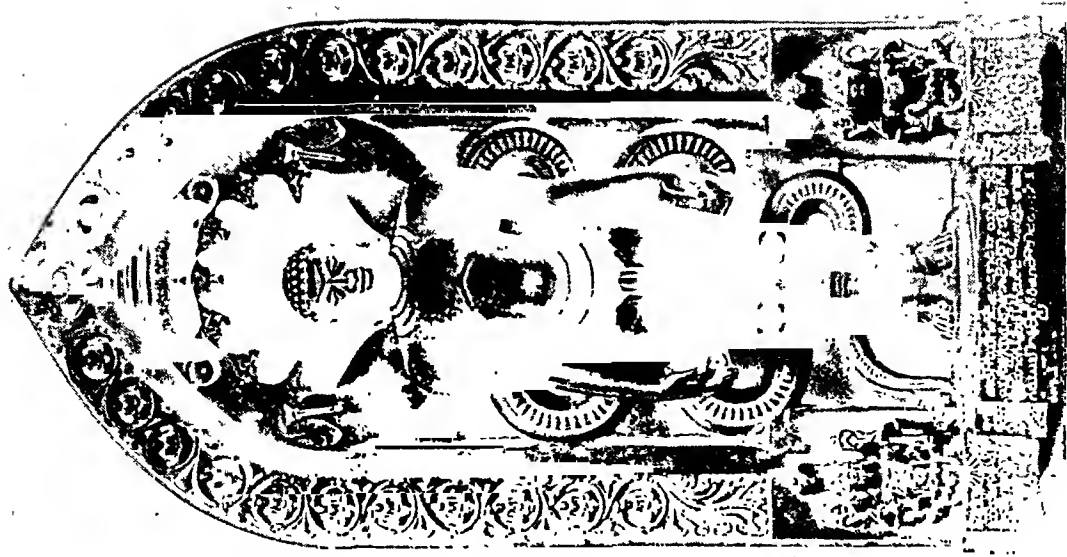
(b) The river-goddess, Cave XXI, Ellora, Hyderabad state



state: Bombay state



(a) A goddess in Cave VII, Aurangābād, Hyderabad state

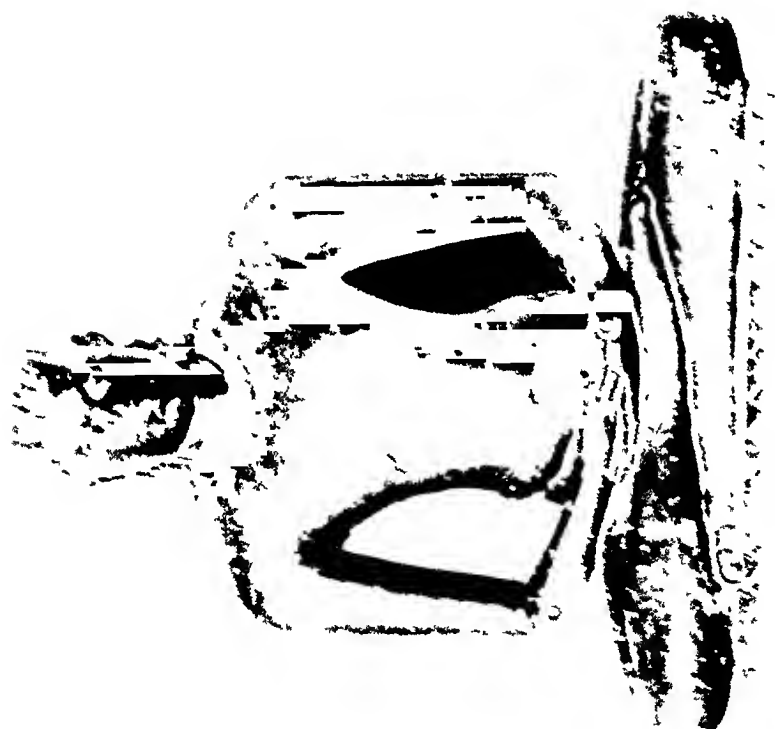


(b) A Jain image, Salar Jung Collection,  
Hyderabad state





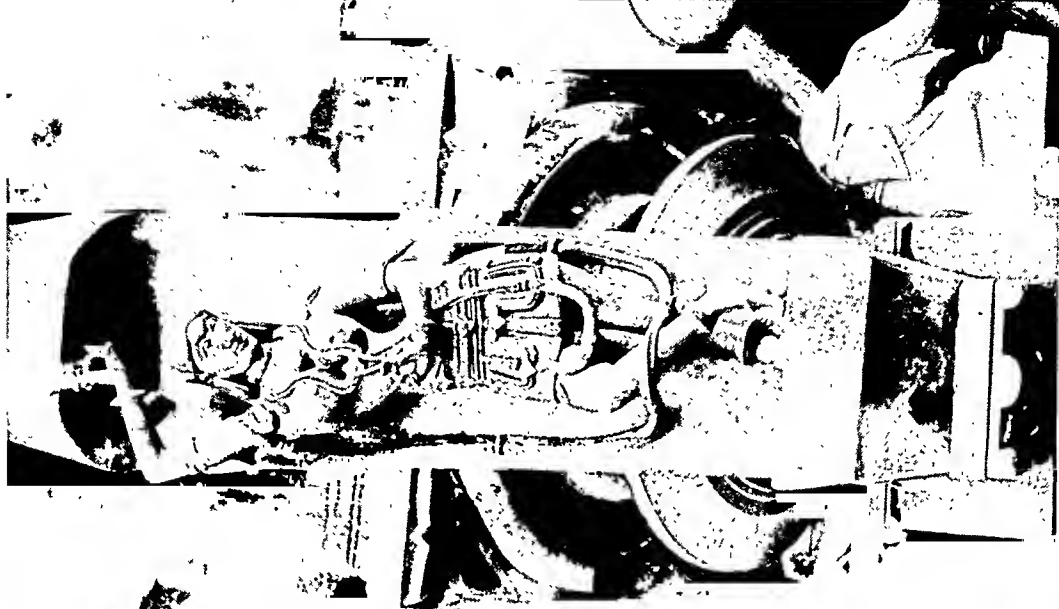
65 The figure of a queen, Hydrabad Temple,  
Hydrabad State



66 The Jain image in the Hydrabad Museum



(a) The figure of a dancer, Ramappa Temple, Palampet,  
Hyderabad state



(b) Another dancer, the same temple



(a)  $\Delta$  Nāgūṇī, Rāmappa Temple, Hyderabad state



(a)  $\Delta$  Yākaḥiṇī, Pālampet Temple, Hyderabad state



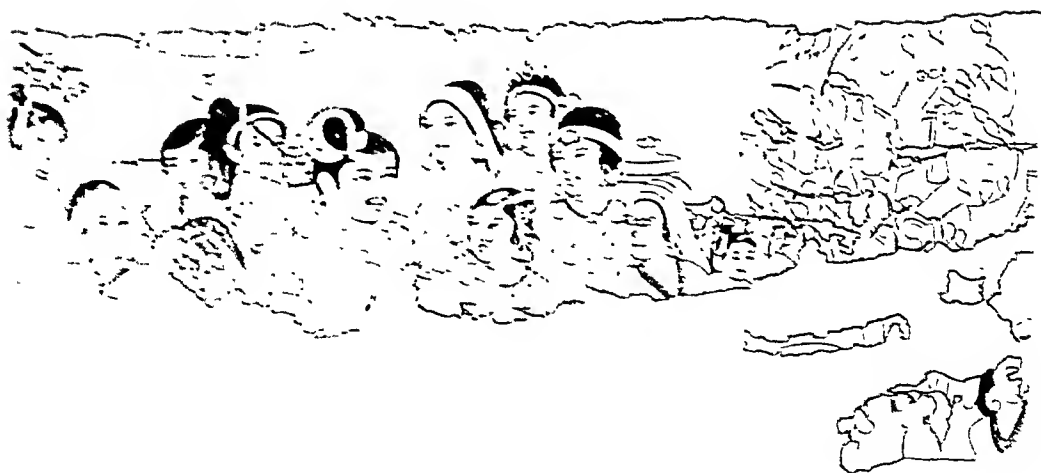
(a) Figures of Śiva, Pañchīśvara Temple,  
Pāngul, Hyderabad state



(b) The figure of Gaṇeśa, the same temple



27 Lakshmi as lamp-bearer, Hyderabad Museum



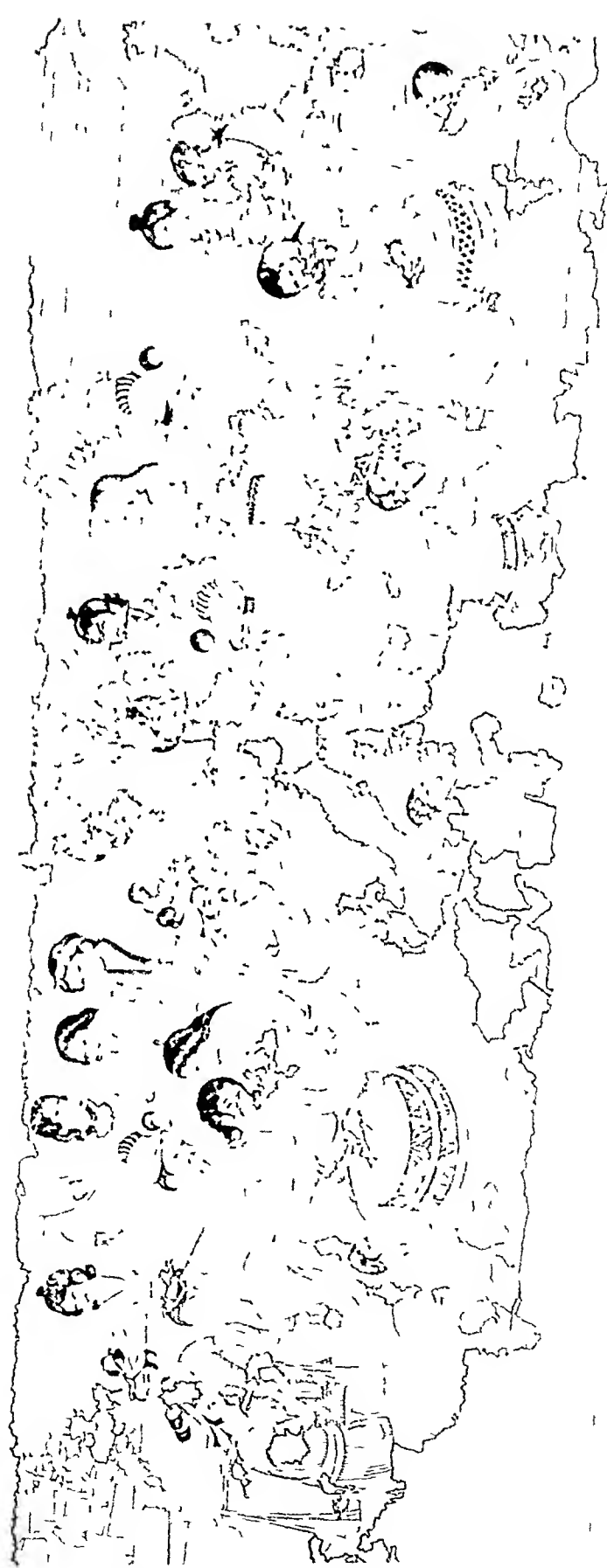
28 A sālā worshipping the Bodhi-tree, Cave X, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



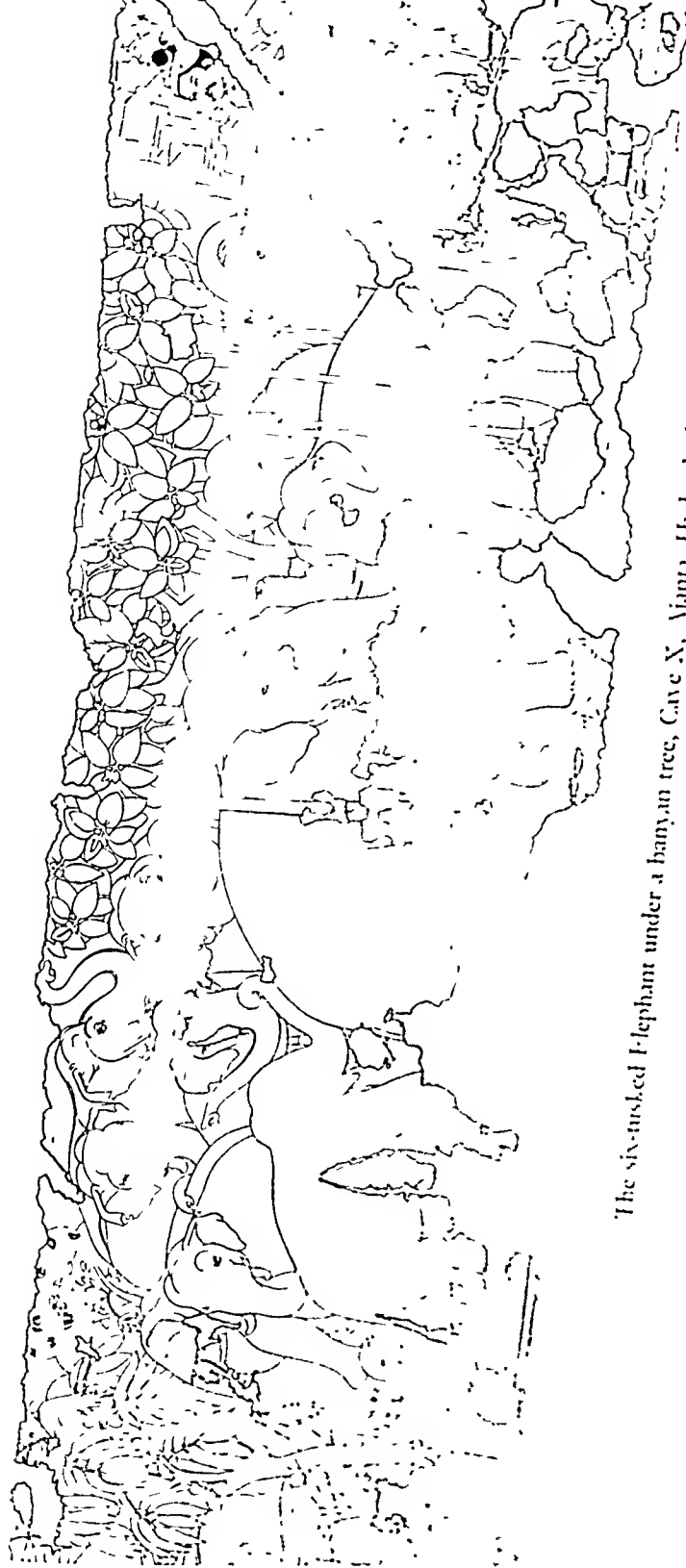
(a) The dance scene, Cave X, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(b) The six-tusked Elephant (Shad-Danta) with his herd, Cave X, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



The Shad-Danta Jataka, Cave X, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



The six-tusked Elephant under a banyan tree, Cave N, Ajanta, Hyderabad state





Mother and child before the Buddha, Cave XVII, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



Prince Siddhārta, Cave I, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(a) The pose of a lady: Cave I, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(b) The Black Princess, the same cave



(a) Decorative frieze of Cave I, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(b) Figure of an *Arhat*, Cave II, Ajanta



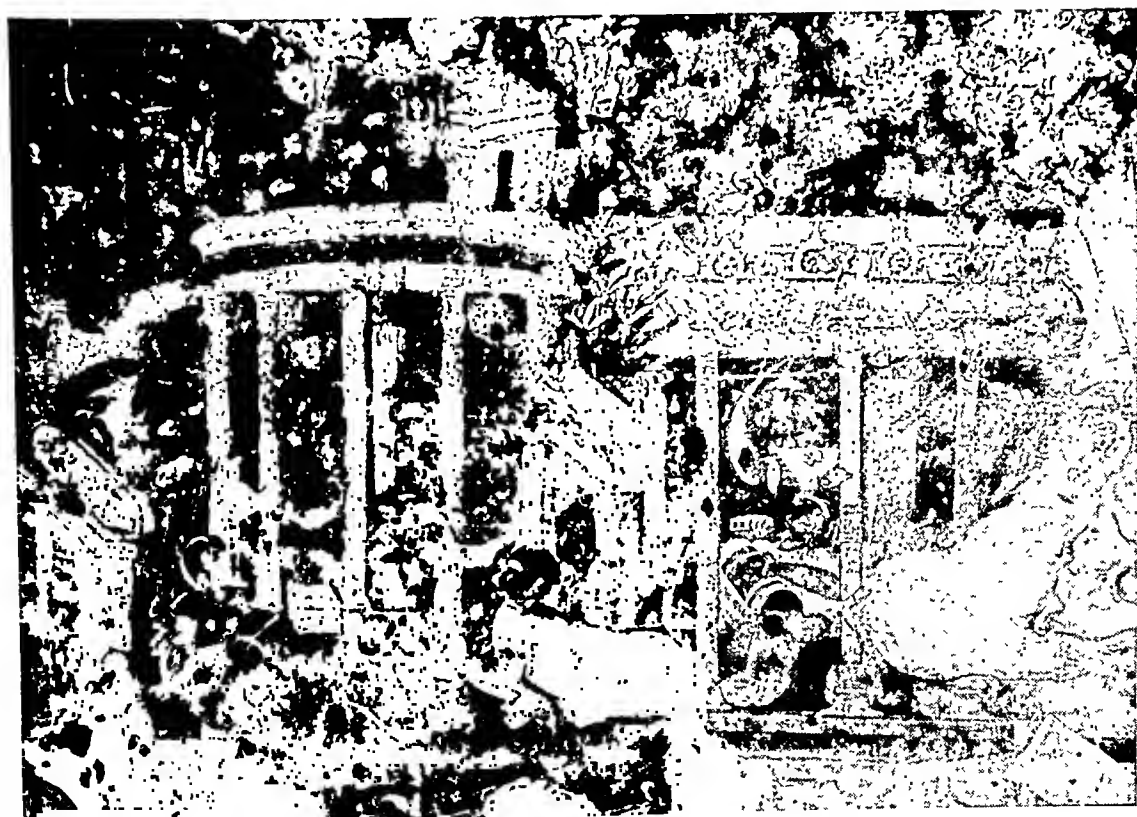
(a) The panel representing animal figures, Cave XVII, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(b) The merry-makers on the door-frame of the same cave



(a) The avaricious Brāhman, Jūjaka, Cave XVII, Ajanta,  
Hyderabad state



(b) The round Pavilion, Cave XVI, Ajanta



6. Shiva and Parvati, Cave III, Bidam, Bellary state



7. A Brahmanic deity in the act of adoration,  
Kailasa, Ellora, Hyderabad state



(a) A battle scene, Kailāsa, Ellora,  
Hyderabad state



(b) Gandhāras, ceiling of the Indra Sabhā, Ellora





(a) A Bodhisattva, Kondapur,  
Hyderabad state



(b) A *Yaksha*, from the same site



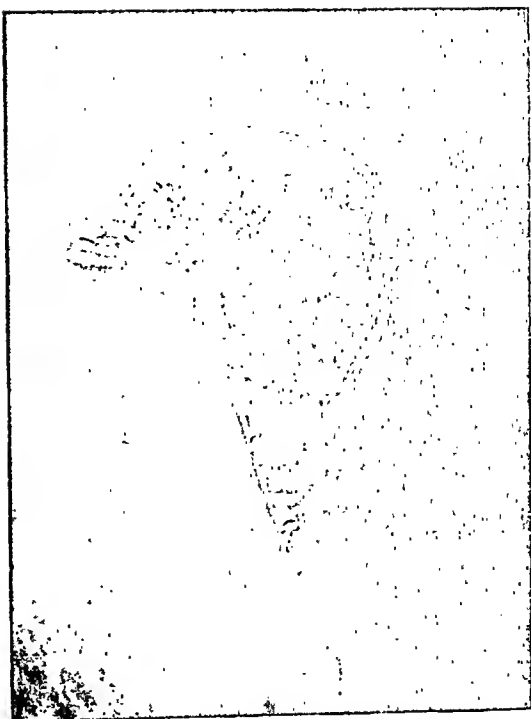
(c) Another *Yaksha*, from the  
same site



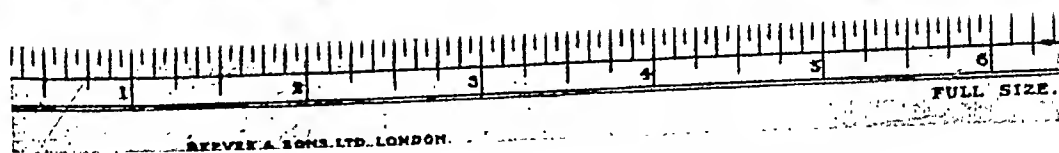
(d) Another *Yaksha*, from the  
same site



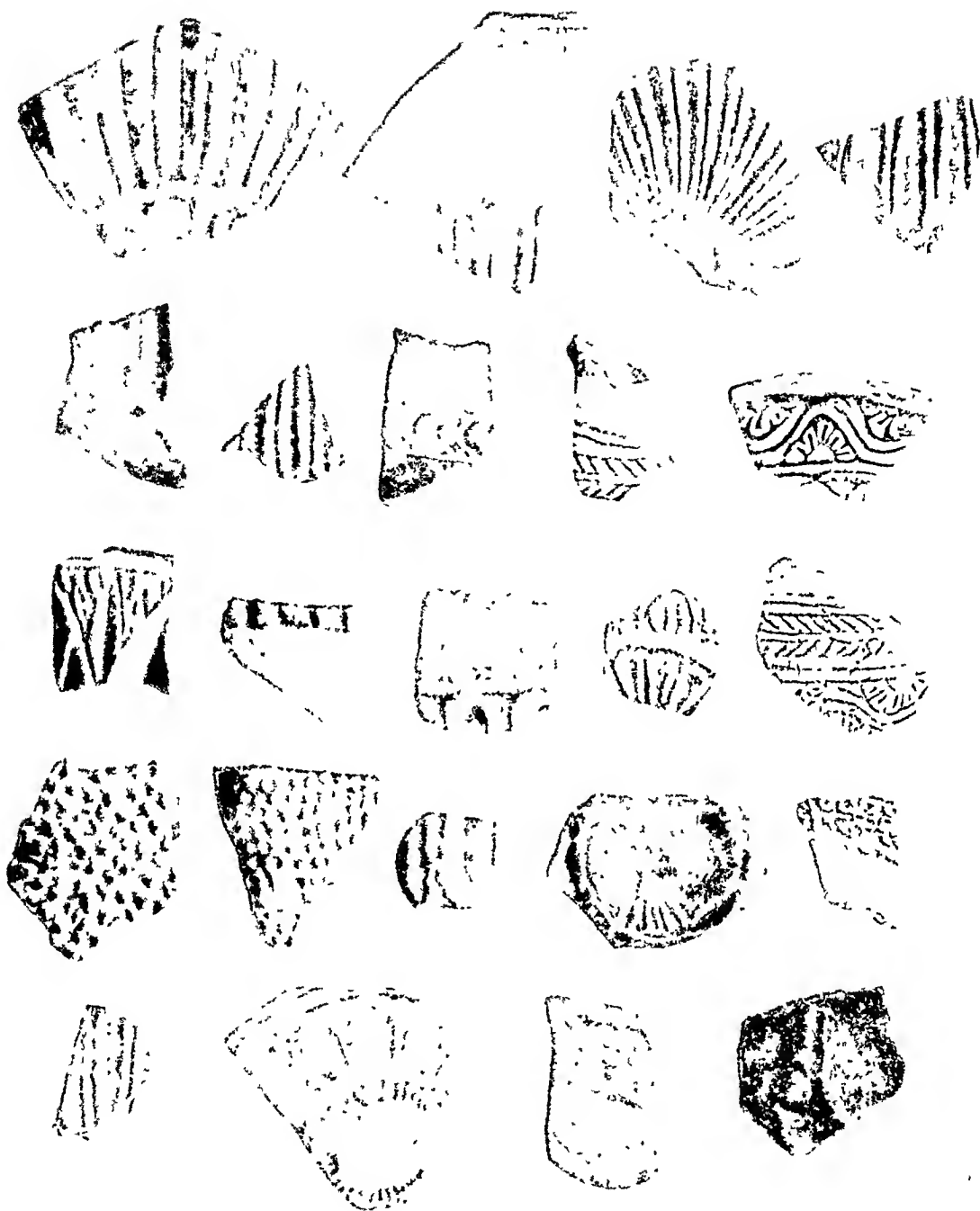
(a) Terracotta figure of a lion, Kondāpur, Hyderabad state



(b) Terracotta head of a ram, from the same place



(c) Terracotta figures of a horse and a bull, from the same place



Pottery with ornamental designs, Kondāpur, Hyderabad state



(a) A Bodhisattva, Kondāpur, Hyderabad state



(b) Two heads with long hair curled up in a roll, from the same site



(a) Kuvira or some other *Yakshi*, Kondapur,  
Hyderabad state



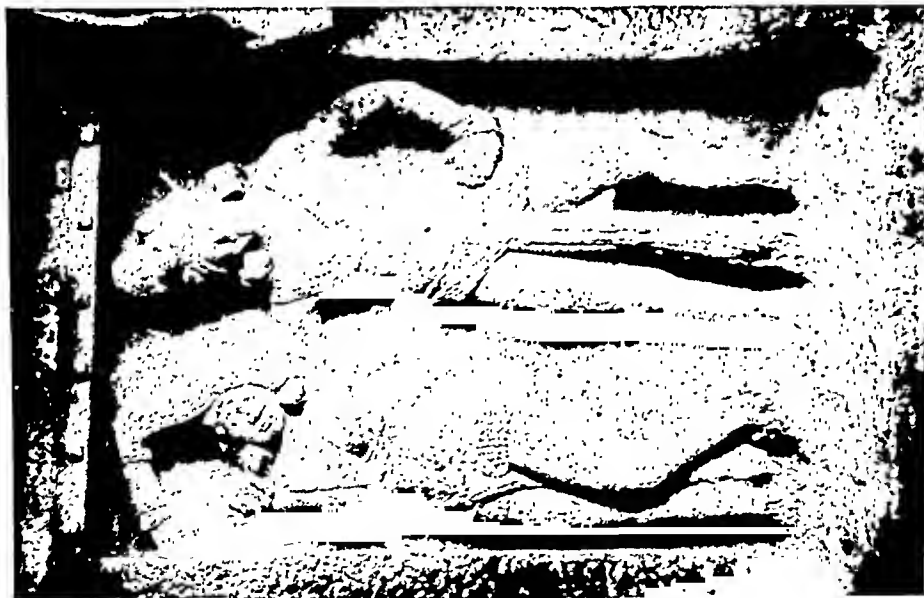
(b) The same, back view



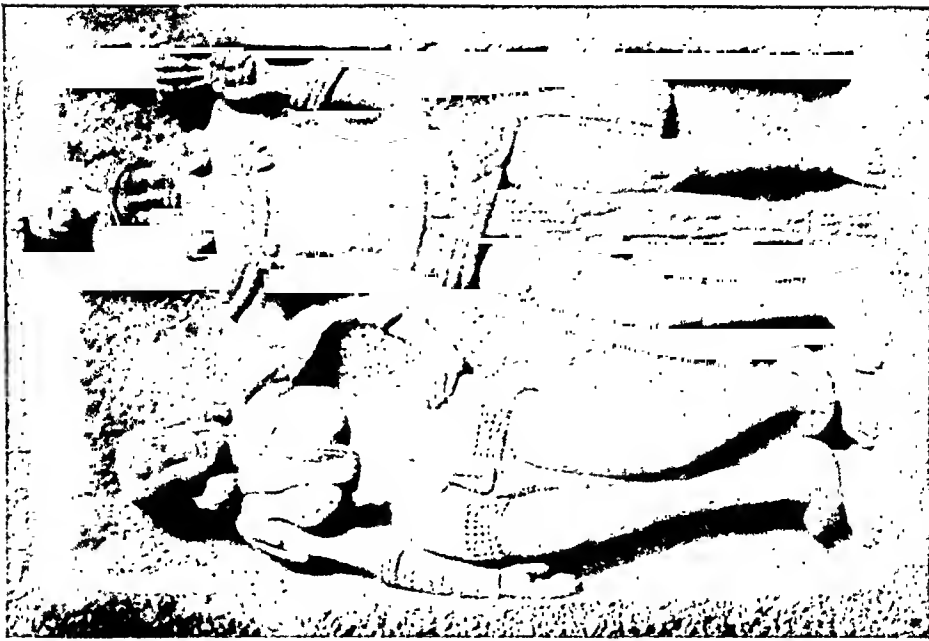
(c) Hariti (d), Kondapur



(e) The mother goddess, Earth,  
from the same site



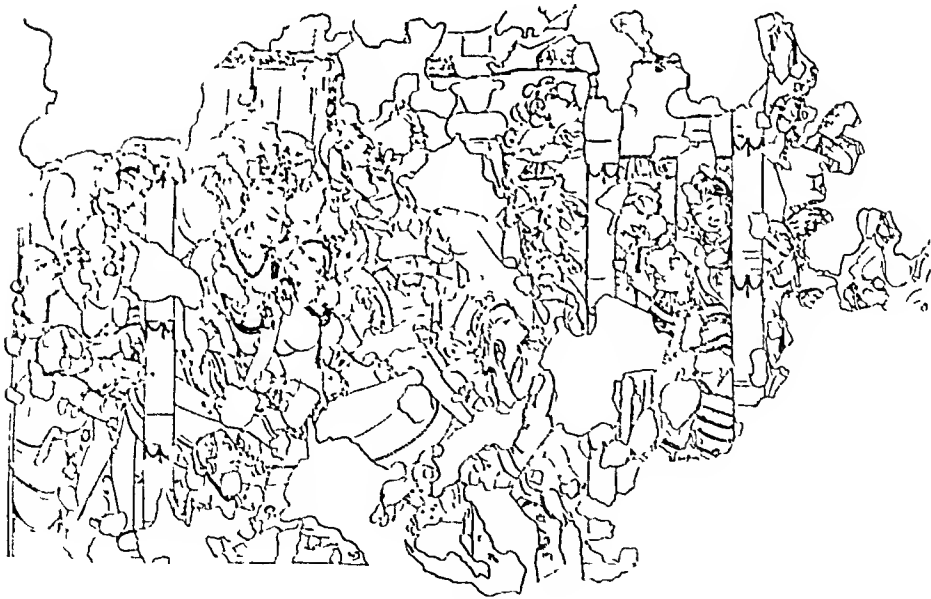
(a) A dancing pair, the *chaitiya*-cave, Kārle, Bombay state



(b) Another pair, the same cave



(a) A dance scene, Cave I, Ajanta, Hyderabad state



(b) Another dance scene, the same cave



(a) A dance scene, Cave VII, Aurangābād, Hyderabad state



(b) A dancing girl, the temple at Pālampet, Hyderabad state